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[THE INTERRUPTED TETE-A-TETE.]

THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

Ghost-like amidst the unfamiliar past,
Grim shadows sit along the stream of time.
Vainly our learning trifles with the vast
Millions of ages. Like the wizard's rhyme,
We call the dead, and from the Tartarus
'Tis but the dead that rise to answer us.

LAURA DE FONTANE was sitting in her gorgeous boudoir on the morning after the ball at the Embassy. She looked a fitting queen for such a shrine, and it might seem that it had been arranged so as to harmonize most entirely with her style of beauty. The few paintings, the small, rare statues that adorned that Italian apartment, had something regal in the scenes and figures represented. And yet there was more of physical charm than intellectual in their grand loveliness; while the crimson silk hangings and the Eastern plants in the shaded verandah cast an almost Oriental character over the whole entourage.

The countess herself was in keeping with the scene thus created for her.

True, her dress was of the black hue so universally adopted in those southern climes. But it was clasped round her well-moulded waist by emeralds and diamonds of immense value, and a locket of the same precious stones hung by an antique gold chain from her throat, and the hanging sleeves revealed bracelets of exquisite cameos on her white arms.

A volume of a recent French author lay on a marble slab by her chair, but she was not reading. Her eyes were bent on a fan with which she was idly playing, but there was something in their expression that showed that her thoughts were far away from the storied pictures that adorned it. And when the door opened and her husband entered she either did not hear or did not care to notice his advent.

Count Albert quietly advanced, and took up his position opposite to his beautiful wife, where he surveyed her some moments in silence.

"Laura," he said, at last, "are you tired, asleep, or speculating on the events of that precious production of Alexandre Dumas, that you seem so utterly lost to the present?"

The countess did not start at the sudden sound of his voice. She only raised her almond-shaped eyes to his with a dreamy air.

"I believe I am weary—at heart at least," she said, half audibly, "but it matters not. Do you want anything, Albert? I thought you were going with Lord Saville in his yacht this morning."

"That is just what I came to tell you," he replied. "I have business that I did not expect, which calls me away for at least two hours, so if this young or old friend of yours should arrive you can make my excuses. But I scarcely expect he will, as I sent down to his hotel quite in time."

Laura bowed her head in languid assent, but still her husband did not seem satisfied.

"Shall you be glad to see him, Laura, if he should have missed my messenger?" he asked.

"No, no; at least, it does not signify," she replied, "yet he is connected with a past that I dare not recall, lest it should drive all peace, all self-control from my brain." And she put her hand to her brow, with a look of impatient pain in her beautiful eyes.

"What have you to regret, Laura?" asked the count, calmly. "Perhaps you will enlighten me as to the cause of this extraordinary burst of discontent. I do not think that Laura Nugent, when I visited her in her little home in Westminster, was quite as evasive as the titled mistress of this humble apartment." And he glanced round with a half-proud, half-scornful air at the splendid belongings.

"I know, I know," she said. "You need not taunt me with that, Albert. I am well aware that I owe all to you of wealth and luxury. But then that will not cover guilt; it will not calm my conscience when I think of him—and her."

"Please explain yourself a little more distinctly, my fair countess," said her husband, half proudly surveying her magnificent figure. "I presume you

allude to the amiable criminal who has so long enjoyed his queen's bounty in a foreign land, and to his unfortunate child. Is it so?"

She bowed her head once again, but her lips were firmly closed, as if she dared not trust herself to speak.

But at last she relaxed the tension thus maintained so far as to murmur:

"Albert, it is a breach of trust, a treachery that I have committed. Will it not be visited upon me? That child was given to my keeping, and I have abandoned her."

"Scarcely, my love, scarcely," he returned, half mockingly, "when you have entrusted her to your devoted and loving husband, who I may venture to say is somewhat better fitted to arrange for her suitable provision and future than yourself. If the Church says we are one, then your duties and obligations are mine also, and I take leave to fulfil them in my own fashion, Countess Laura."

"Albert, where is she? Will you not tell me? Will you not let me see her—know of her safety and happiness by the evidence of my own eyes? It would be some relief to this gnawing pain that makes me expect a curse on my head."

The whole aspect of the count charged as if by magic.

"Hearken, Laura," he said, sternly. "You are my wife. I am content so far—that my choice suited the purpose for which it was made. You are as handsome, nay handsomer than ever. You play your part in the world well, and in due time we shall return to the country which I may call mine almost as much as yours, and you shall shine in English circles as you have done in foreign salons. But I must have obedience and truth. Gwendra is safe. I pledge you my word as to that. Her future will depend on circumstances, but it shall be cared for better than it deserves, unless you drive me to harsher measures."

"But why—why, Albert? The unfortunate, innocent child can have done no wrong—to you at least," she pleaded.



"Was she not the child of your rival, of the man who played you false, and injured you in the tenderest part of woman's life?" he said, sternly. "Laura, let this folly cease, or you may turn me against you fatally, permanently. Mark that! and let this be the last argument between us. You do not know me yet, or you would not again have risked these wearisome complaints. Adieu for a few hours, signora," he added, again changing his Proteus face to a playful gallantry as a servant knocked at the door and announced the carriage.

Laura suffered rather than returned the caress he bestowed. And then, when he was gone, she sank into a fit of deep, remorseful memory which mingled with the contending feelings that fear and pride and luxurious tastes united in her breast.

"Would I have it different could I recall the past?" she murmured. "Should I prefer that life of hardship and toil and contempt?"

She surveyed herself in one of the gorgeous mirrors that reflected the whole apartment.

And the glittering jewels, the exquisitely arrayed coiffure, the artistic beauty of the chair in which she sat, which seemed as a setting to her queenly loveliness, pleaded, as it were, for justification of her choice.

"It is done," she said, "it cannot be recalled. And after all he is right. Why should I suffer for my rival's child? She had all I prized most—love and happiness, while I was abandoned to poverty and disgrace! They are dead, but, at least, they can have retribution in their child!"

She brushed away the mist that seemed to have gathered before her eyes, and once more applied herself resolutely to her volume.

It told of passion and revenge. And her cheeks glowed with an answering flush, at the exciting picture.

She was the admired of all who had come in her range, she would command a yet higher sphere, she would at least reap the reward if she had sinned and suffered.

Time flew by, and she scarcely heeded its progress. It was nearly an hour ere she was roused by the quick approach of footsteps and the words "My Lord Saville, signora," uttered in most indistinct tones by the Italian domestic, that were almost unintelligible to her English ears.

But ere she could inquire again Sholto was in the room, and her hand clasped in his, with the true warmth of an English greeting.

"I find your husband has played me false, countess," he said, smilingly, "but it matters not, since it procures me the privilege of a few minutes with you. Did he leave any message for me?"

Laura explained, and the young viscount coolly assumed a seat during the few words that sufficed to give her husband's message.

"Ah, I understand. I had left my hotel long before, and, after waiting till I was tired on the yacht, thought I had better come to ascertain the mystery."

"I am sorry," began the countess, "and yet I did wish to say one word to you, Lord Saville, that I trust to your honour not to betray to any one."

Lord Saville looked somewhat astonished at this abrupt plunge into some mysterious confidence which he perhaps had no desire to receive.

"You may certainly rely on my secrecy, countess," he returned, "but till I hear what you have to confide in me I can give no promise except that."

"It is enough," she said, with winning softness that charged the whole character of her loveliness. "I can trust you, Lord Saville, as an English gentleman and peer. And, after all, the favour I have to ask is not so terrible as to need such a prelude."

"What is it that I can do to serve you?" he said, venturing, as he spoke, to take her hand in his.

It was like velvet in his touch, warm and soft and full of life.

"You will not misunderstand, assure me that," she returned, softly. "It may seem strange and even blameable what I am going to say, aye, and treacherous to my husband, to any but a generous and noble nature. But you will make allowance for me, tried and helpless as I am."

"Be assured I will not misinterpret what you have to say," he replied, his brain warning to fire under the gaze of those bright, liquid eyes.

"Then I will not hesitate to speak," she went on. "Lord Saville, you were connected in blood with the wife of that unhappy man. In one sense you are bound to assist and protect her child. There is no need for such guardianship now, but, if she should be cast on the world, should she need a friend, will you promise to consider her as a sacred charge?"

Sholto looked somewhat bewildered.

"I did not suppose she would need any care but your's and your husband's, countess. If I remember aright, she was entirely removed from every chance of interesting those who might perhaps be drawn to her by blood and pity."

"What matters that?" exclaimed the countess, quickly; "I did not speak of the past, but the future. I do not choose to comment on my husband's arrangements, Lord Saville. I only want your promise to act as a man and a relative ought to an orphan child."

"Where is she? How am I likely to meet her?" he asked. "The despoiled child that she is, it were better that she should have been spared such trials as await her," he added, bitterly.

"Do not ask," she said, hurriedly, "that is not to the purpose now. See, Lord Saville, here is one great boon that I would ask at your hands. This jewel belonged to her father. He gave it to me in days of yore, when—we—were—friends. I engaged to preserve it for his sake, to give it to his child when I had no means of holding it sacred from cold, indifferent hands. That time is come. Will you guard it as a precious trust," she added, beseechingly, "and give it to her when you may see her, and she needs encouragement and cheering and the solace that some one loved and remembered her in the hour of death?"

And as she spoke she gave Sholto a richly worked chain with some pendant jewels attached, that were evidently of very rare and peculiar value.

Lord Saville examined it with interest.

"Was this poor Loster's?" he asked. "I believe it was purchased by him for his wife, and preserved after her death for her child," was the response. "It will be a token for her that she had some one who once loved, once blessed her in her infancy. I shall be happier when it is out of my keeping, it burns me, it is a curse," she added, quickly.

Sholto surveyed her with interested sympathy.

"You are too sensitive," he said, "you give an exaggerated estimate to all these things, countess. There can be no blame as yet to that unhappy criminal, or maybe to myself for having even acknowledged his kindred, through my unfortunate relative, whom he drew into the fatal snare."

"Hush, hush, you know not what you are speaking of," she replied, firmly. "Your kindly sympathy is grateful, precious to me, Lord Saville, but it should be shown by deeds, not words."

"It shall," he returned. "Give me the trinket and I will do your bidding, countess, as I would to the departed and the loved."

She placed it in his hand, which closed over hers as if in token of the pledge thus given.

Their eyes met. She was as yet in the very zenith and perfection of her charms, but it was not in woman's nature not to be flattered with the uncontrollable admiration of a man some years her junior and in birth her more than her equal.

"Thanks, thanks," she murmured. "I will never forget this, never. In after days, at any crisis, when Laura de Fontane can show gratitude, be assured she is bound to you by every tie."

"And I," he said, in a low, earnest voice, "I am from this hour only too entirely your slave, countess. Use your power gently, honorably, as a woman bound to a husband by every sacred tie alone can do with safety to herself and him who acknowledges it."

Laura's voice was scarcely audible as she whispered an assent. But if there was only gratified vanity in the look, and pressure of the hand, it might well be enough for a young, impetuous, and, as yet, unfettered man like the Viscount Saville.

There was a moment's pause. Then he seemed to recollect the object of the pledge thus given.

"Tell me," he said, "where, or at least under what name to find her. If I mistake not she does not bear her father's, and—"

But ere she could reply, ere any but the words "Her name" could escape her lips the door opened and Count Albert entered.

Perhaps they had been too engrossed to hear his steps, or, was it possible that he had intentionally softened every sound that could have warned them of his neighbourhood? In any case there was no trace of annoyance or suspicion when he came toward the pair, who certainly were rather nearer together than was quite natural under the usual customs of society in such conventional visits.

"Ha, my lord, I must offer you a thousand apologies," he said, frankly extending his hand. "I fear from finding you here that my message did not reach you. Shall we have sufficient time for a sail now do you think?"

Lord Saville hesitated, but a glance from the countess decided his reply.

"Certainly, count. There can be no danger in such a day and such a climate as this, even if we are somewhat beyond sundown. That is, if your fair lady will not be alarmed at your delay."

"Oh, Laura has strong nerves, she can endure a great deal of anxiety," he returned, with a veiled sneer. "I am about as privileged as you are, who still enjoy your liberty. If you are as lucky in your

choice, my lord, you need not hesitate in venturing in matrimonial restraints."

And with a gay and tender salute to his wife he led the way from the room.

"Had he heard?—did he suspect anything?" Laura asked herself, and could not answer the knotty and momentous question.

CHAPTER VII.

I had a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,
That I by the force of nature
Might in some dim wise divine
The depth of His infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

"GWENDA, darling, such joy! Mamma has given me leave to ask you to spend part of the holidays with us. And mamma dare not refuse mamma, I'm certain."

And the youthful Lady Maud Dorrington danced with the gay delight of her bright spirits at the very idea of her friend's company during the coming Christmas.

But the orphan herself scarcely responded to the excitement of the duke's daughter.

"You are a darling, as usual, and the duchess is most kind," said Gwenda, hesitatingly, "but—"

"Nay—I will have no such odious word," interrupted Lady Maud, placing her little hand before the girl's mouth. "What preference can you possibly have for remaining at this odious old dreary house instead of sharing our Christmas gambols at the Hove?"

Gwenda shook her pretty head with a half-sad smile.

"I am not quite so silly or self-denying, Maud," she replied, "but there are so many reasons to make it impossible. I cannot go indeed, indeed I cannot."

"Please to explain the wonderful mystery then," said Lady Maud, demurely.

"Oh, it is easy—plain enough," said Gwenda, with a desperate effort at firmness. "Do you know, Maud, that I am a complete wall on the wall, and so inferior to you that it would be simple madness to dream of anything but the school friendship which makes me so happy but which I can never expect when we are no longer children."

And Gwenda resolutely gulped down the proud sob, and stood with quiet dignity before her laughing friend.

"You very foolish little Gwenda; please to understand in the first place that I do not call myself or you either a child," exclaimed Lady Maud, "and certainly you have a very grand air for one, Miss Lorraine. And, next, if there is any difference between us, it is only that you are a hundred times prettier and cleverer than I am. And if I could but be half as accomplished as you I should turn my noble parents' head, that's certain. Lastly, you must come, and no mistake or hesitation."

Gwenda still hesitated.

"But does the marchioness know who I am—that I have no friends, no relatives, Maud?" she asked.

"I suppose so. Mamma of course would inform her of all necessary and unnecessary matters, and I don't see what it has to do with the matter at all," persisted the peer's wilful daughter. "Of course, as we are neither of us 'out' we shall not be in the full blaze of gaieties but only in the starlight, or, I might rather say, twilight. So just be a good, submissive child, and look as delighted as I am," went on the impetuous girl.

She was a generous, impulsive nature was that daughter of prosperity and rank.

But she was spoiled, wilful, and an heiress, which were dangerous accompaniments to such qualities when the world's sunshine should bring them into play.

Her face and figure had certainly the charm of an aristocratic and graceful mien and the stamp of refinement on every feature, but she was not strictly speaking handsome had such aids to beauty been wanting.

But the fine brilliant eyes and laughing mouth and glowing complexion were sufficient to give her the epithet of "beautiful," when combined with such gifts of fortune and rank.

"But who will be at the Hove?—I mean to be with us?" asked Gwenda, timidly, though she feared that further opposition to her friend would be in vain.

"Oh, in the first place, my brother Barnard, Lord Cranmore, as he is called, and then my cousin, or second cousin, I don't know which, Gilbert, of course will be home from Eton or Oxford. I really forget where," continued the young creature, carelessly. "And we shall have some of the other families of the neighbourhood, but only the boys, to be always with us, you know."

Perhaps Gwenda thought these sufficiently formidable. Or perhaps her proud spirit rebelled against

the idea that two half-fledged youths, as she presumed Lord Cranmore and his cousin to be, could in the least affect her proceedings, or her peace of mind.

"If you are quite sure," she said, doubtfully, "if there is no mistake on the part of the marchioness, I should be foolish to refuse a rare and it may be last enjoyment of such happiness, Maud. Only," she added, "you know I do not fancy I am your equal because you are kind to me."

"Kind, yes, that is all very well," laughed the young lady. "As if you did not stand my friend in all sorts of ways, I do believe I must be very generous not to be jealous of you," she added, gazing at her friend, as if a sudden consciousness of Gwendolyn's singular attractions was dawning upon her.

"You are cruel to jest on such subjects, Maud, dear," was the gentle reply that perhaps stilled the rising irritation.

And Maud laughed a gay disclaimer as she flew lightly away, that for the moment banished all apprehensions from the orphan's breast.

Yet Gwendolyn felt a strange shrinking from this fascinating prospect, that could scarcely comport with such young and joyous years. Perhaps the very solitude of her position gave an unnatural maturity to her feelings. Else why should the child-girl of fourteen ever dream of danger or omens awaiting her in so brilliant a prospect?

Gwendolyn had no need of madame making injunctions to remember the wide difference of station between herself and the Marquis of Brunton's family in her intercourse with them. Still the warnings served one admirable purpose. They raised the proud spirit, till it vanquished all craven fears of the ordeal awaiting her.

Gwendolyn prepared for the visit as calmly as if she had been a princess of the blood about to grace an inferior by her presence. If she was courted to comply with the urgent entreaties of Lady Maud, why should she be the victim of a morbid and base humiliation before the accidents of rank and wealth?

The idea acted as a tonic to brace Madame MacLaine's mysterious pupil to efforts worthy of her powers.

"Gilbert, stop, do you not see who is in this carriage which you are rushing away from so wildly?" said Lord Cranmore, a handsome if not particularly clever looking young fellow of some eighteen years of age, as he and his cousin were returning to the house after a sporting expedition with one of the keepers, to whose care they were privately committed by the judicious marquis.

The young fellow addressed was somewhat of the same age with the young viscount, though it would have been difficult to decide on the difference of their respective years.

Gilbert Dorington had more of the regular if somewhat insipid features of the heir of his house. He was plain, so some would have said. He had only a pair of splendidly expressive, intellectual eyes and a magnificently proportioned brow to redeem him from the charge. His figure was tall, but as yet ungainly in its proportions. His complexion somewhat sallow, his mouth was saved from actual unpleasantness by his perfect teeth and a beautiful but rare smile.

Altogether his was no aspect to attract or even induce a casual observer to give another glance or wish to continue an acquaintance chance might have begun.

He silently complied with his cousin's request. It would have been childish to do otherwise when the daughter of his relative and guardian—the companion of his early years—was in question. And without another word he slackened his pace and waited till Maud's carriage overtook them, with herself and companion in its ample recess.

"Ha, little sister, welcome home," said Lord Cranmore, carelessly stooping to press a kiss on his young sister's cheek. "I suppose you are glad enough to escape from madame and her instruments of torture to bend you into the conventional shape of young ladyhood."

"Really, Bernard, you are very rude, and forget most strangely that I am not a child now," said Lady Maud, loftily. "Take care that I do not repay you in your own coin when I come out, as I intend to do in at least two years from this time. And, besides, I have brought a friend to introduce to you," she added. "Gwendolyn, dear, this is my very impertinent brother, Lord Cranmore. I must warn you to try and make the holiday pleasant or Miss Lorraine will not come to us again."

Lord Cranmore certainly did not exactly respond to his sister's expectations.

But perhaps the hesitation in his welcome might proceed from other causes than reluctance to show cordial kindness to the guest. His eyes were eagerly fixed on the lovely face of his sister's friend, and for a moment he scarcely seemed to remember the necessity of doing aught save give the courteous bow that instinct prompted at the introduction.

"Really, Bernard, you are grown very stupid or very rude," exclaimed Maud, half archly, half petu-

lantly, as she marked her brother's manner. "Gilbert, I hope you have not so completely lost your wits," pursued the young girl, eagerly, "or Miss Lorraine will think us perfect barbarians."

"Nonsense, Maud, your sex has more discretion," exclaimed Lord Cranmore, interposing between his cousin and Gwendolyn. "Pray do not believe this foolish, wild girl, Miss Lorraine. She expects every one to be as headlong in their proceedings as herself. We will make you comprehend us a little better during your visit here—ah, Gilbert?"

Gilbert Dorington bowed in silence to the half-introduction.

There was no sign of interest in his manner as he glanced at the young stranger. Yet he could have described every lineament had an artist been at hand to perpetuate them on canvass. His words were addressed to Maud, however:

"We scarcely expected you so soon. The duchess said at breakfast you would not arrive till three or four o'clock, and it is only two at present."

"Ah, you would not have been here to be so opportunely waylaid on your course," laughed Lady Maud, gaily. "I am not at all surprised, knowing your old habits, com, only I hoped you had improved since your first term at Oxford. But as we are dreadfully hungry you had better jump in, or else tell the coachman to drive on without you," she added. "We breakfasted on school fare at eight this morning, please to remember."

Lord Cranmore replied by springing into the carriage. Gilbert by a silent bow and a hint to the servant to drive on.

Lady Maud betrayed a girlish petulance at the decision.

"Really, Bernard, Gilbert is still a perfect savage," she said; "only fancy going away when I have come back after five months' absence."

"Never mind, Maudie, there are plenty to be vanquished at the juvenile parties impending; without flying at such doubtful game as an Oxonian in his first term," laughed the young earl. "Remember you are but a school girl at present, and appreciate your advantages as they deserve. Am I not right, Miss Lorraine?" he added, turning to Gwendolyn.

"I scarcely comprehend what you call advantages, Lord Cranmore," replied the girl, proudly. "If you mean that it is very delightful to be still under tutelage, I suppose we are bound to say 'yes' and to mean 'no.' I think it irksome in the extreme."

"Even when there is no responsibility, no fear, no anxiety as to success, with a hundred rivals to contest the palm of conquest?" asked the young man, half sarcastically.

"There could be no anxiety because the contest would be degrading," returned Gwendolyn, loftily. "I cannot imagine any one striving to outshine another only to please or be admired."

"Yet you have no such very humble air in your look and manner, Miss Lorraine," laughed the earl, amused at the child-girl's haughty disclaimer.

"I am humble if declining any such efforts is a proof of it," she said, coldly; "if I do succeed in what I attempt it is for the pleasure of knowing I have the power, not of showing it."

"Oh, you must talk to Gilbert in that strain of philosophy, Miss Lorraine," said Bernard, smiling. "I hope to convert you to more worldly and intelligible ideas before you leave us. Maud, there are to be some charades which will be almost private theatricals at the New Year's juvenile gatherings, and also a ball soon after that festival."

Lady Maud's eyes sparkled.

"Capital, Bernard. You are not quite so detestable after all, if you have organized all this. Mind, Gwendolyn and I are to play the principal parts or I will never forgive you, never!" and the wilful beauty clasped her hands in exulting expectation of triumph.

But the carriage now drove up to the mansion, and in a few minutes Maud was in her mother's arms, and then the marchioness turned to receive her daughter's friend with stately kindness.

"You have contributed much to my child's happiness, it seems, Miss Lorraine; I hope you will find it as easy to share her amusements here, though of course I cannot pretend to have much to do with your arrangements. At any rate you are most welcome as her friend."

Gwendolyn courted her acknowledgments with a quiet grace that at once rather satisfied and yet piqued her Ladyship of Brunton.

It was certainly a mark of good breeding and perhaps birth to receive her condescension so calmly. Yet it had something of presumption in one utterly undistinguished by title or known birth, if it were not too refined and modest to make such interpretation unjust. And when at last she dismissed the girls to their own apartments the marchioness was somewhat divided between admiration, surprise, and it might be a slight uneasiness as to the result of the bringing home of one so remarkably attractive and

charming to come in contact with her own children and friends.

The waking on the next morning was a strange bewilderment for the young Gwendolyn. There was such a contrast between the sober though it must be confessed comfortable apartment which had been her abode for so many years at Madame MacLaine's and the elegance and luxury that surrounded her in that ducal mansion. The exquisite rose-coloured curtains and snowy muslins and the oxidized silver glasses on the toilet table, the china, the fairy-like nick-nacks that were strewn about in all directions gave a refined-inspiring cheerfulness that was most congenial to the young girl's beauty-loving nature. And as she sprang out from her couch and looked on the snow-covered landscape with its fairy fretwork of white branches and carpet, on which the sun shone joyously, and then turned to the blazing fire that warmed the whole atmosphere of the apartment, she abandoned herself to the enjoying of the whole entourage of luxury with true girlish forgetfulness of the drawbacks to her happiness.

She made a careful toilet, albeit her beauty scarcely made it as prolonged an affair as with less-favoured damsels. And then, as there was no sign of Maud's appearance in the sitting-room assigned to them, she wrapped herself in a thick cloak and fur and stepped out on the broad terrace that ran before the wing where their apartments lay, and stretched out to a sloping lawn laid out in the Italian style so far as could be discovered under its veil of snow and frost.

It was too inspiring a scene to be resisted. Gwendolyn literally sprang along in the joyous exuberance of her spirits, and scarcely remembered that she was almost trespassing on unknown and forbidden ground by this singular ramble.

It was not till she came to a sort of secluded piece of water, which was almost worthy of the name of lake, that she began to recall the questionable character of her proceeding.

But here again was fresh fascination for the reclusive school girl.

The water was frozen, hard enough even for the performance of a skater who was crossing over its smooth surface.

It was Gilbert Dorington, as Gwendolyn soon perceived, and in a few minutes he caught sight of her retreating figure, and came toward the side where she stood.

"You are out early this bitter day, Miss Gwendolyn," he said, doffing his cap. "Is Maud with you?"

"No, I do not think she was up when I came out," she replied, colouring. "I daresay it is very wrong of me to have left the house in this manner. I hope that Lady Brunton will not be angry."

"I do not suppose she will know anything of the matter," returned the young man, coolly. "She will not breakfast till another hour at any rate, and you can certainly make a proper appearance in her apartment long before she will look for you."

"Then you think it is enough to escape being discovered?" said the girl, with involuntary quickness.

"Is not that the code at Madame MacLaine's?" he asked, coolly, as he divested himself of his skates, and appeared to prepare for a walk home.

"I do not know. It is not mine," she said, with the air of a resolute woman, rather than a child-girl as she was.

"Then I suppose you and Maud are in accord on that subject; you are great friends, I believe?" he said, half cynically.

"I do not pretend to speak for Lady Maud. She is very kind to me. I hardly think I ought to call her friend, as our positions are so different."

"Then you think persons or even girls like you and my young cousin must be equal to have any friendship?" he asked, in a tone far more earnest than he, perhaps, intended.

"Yes," she answered, briefly, "do not you?"

"Then you would say I cannot be friends with Lord Cranmore, or even Maud. They are rich and tilted, I am poor and a commoner."

"But you are their cousin, that makes a difference—oh, so great," she said, sadly.

"I would not be impertinent, or I should say that the same argument would apply to any one who was a lady, as you are, Miss Lorraine."

"I do not know exactly who I am," she replied, quickly.

Then as she saw his look of surprise she broke off abruptly.

"It is very silly to talk so to you; Mr. Dorington, please to forget it. I should not speak so foolishly about things I do not really understand. I must hurry back now. Is that the bell?" she exclaimed, fully, springing forward as a clang came on the air which could be heard all over the domain.

She had gone some little distance when Gilbert overtook her.

"One moment, Miss Lorraine; you need not be so

alarmed to be seen with me as your guide. No one thinks of me here as a person of the slightest consequence. And I can put you in a rather shorter path to the house if you will allow me."

Gwendolyn bowed her head in silence.

She felt a half-unreasonable dislike to this abrupt manner, the sharp penetration of the cousin of her friend. Lord Cranmore's bright courtesy was so much more charming and winning to a sensitive young nature.

And when at last they came to an opening where the door was visible from which she had issued a brief space before she hastily thanked him and bounded away ere he had time to arrest her progress or wish her the most brief farewell.

He gazed after her graceful figure as it disappeared in the distance with a strange yearning.

"She is no common girl," he muttered to himself. "Yes, she is not one of those conventional types. She can think—yes, and reflect and reason. Now what an idiot I am even to waste a thought on woman or child. Gilbert Dorrington, remember your vow and steel your heart."

(To be continued.)

HOUSEKEEPING IN THE DESERT.

PEOPLE may think that all the good housekeepers belong to civilized lands. Surely no one could expect to hear of one in the Arabian Desert. However, Mr. Layard, in his interesting work, tells us of one who, considering all things, deserved credit as a manager.

She was the wife of Sofek, the Shah of Shammas, and the house she kept was not a house, strictly speaking, for it was only a great tent of goats' hair canvas spread on sixteen poles, and quite open to wind and weather on one side. Her name was Ashma, and she is said to have been a beauty. Her eyebrows and lips were dyed indigo blue, and she wore a jewelled nose-ring, and earrings reaching to her waist; ornaments of all kinds on her person, silver rings on her ankles, and one blue garment as an at home costume.

In the centre of her tent stood sacks of rice, corn, coffee, barley, and other stuff for household use; over these were spread carpets and cushions, and on them Ashma sat enthroned. Little fires were lighted in the tent all about her, and at them her hand-maidens sat stirring messes in great caldrons, or baking bread between hot stones, while others shook about skins full of milk, which was thus churned into butter. The tent was black with smoke, and whenever the cooks wanted anything Ashma rolled off of the bags, turned up the corner of the carpet, untied the sack, and scooped out what was needed with her hands. Meanwhile she scolded and berated her attendants in a manner which would have caused any cook in any Christian land to give warning on the spot.

No one dared touch the provisions without leave save herself, and when she went out for a walk, a second wife, who dared not sit in her presence, squatted on the carpet-covered bags until she returned, and scooped out coffee or beans for the cooks, and scolded them, by permission of Ashma, until she came back to do it herself.

When Ashma had callers she was hospitable, and handed them sugar and water, which, as there were no spoons, was stirred up by a very dirty negro, who sucked his fingers during the process.

M. K. D.

MR. JOHN PYE.—On the 6th ult. a distinguished artist passed from among us, after surviving the period of his activity so long that many people of the present generation have probably never even heard of him. This was Mr. John Pye, one of the founders of the English school of landscape engraving, and, in his day one of the most successful cultivators of that branch of art. Mr. Pye was born at Birmingham on November 7, 1782. He came to London at the age of 19, and studied his art under the well-known historical engraver, Mr. James Heath.

DISCOVERY AT ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, LYNX.—An interesting discovery has been made in clearing the last few inches of earth from the nave, to lower it about five feet. A mass of stone was struck upon, and it proved to be a large part of the Early English spire, which in the eighteenth century fell from the south-west tower, demolishing great part of the nave; which led to its being wholly pulled down and rebuilt in its present debased style. The stone is lying where it fell—towards the north-east, and it includes a large quantity of carved mouldings, gargoyles, and pinnacle work, from which a restoration of the tower and spire might easily be made. The "banqueting-hall" plaster-work ceiling of the nave has been pulled down.

SPECIAL ARMY EXAMINATION.—A War Office no-

tification, issued 22nd January, with reference to General Orders 14 and 35 of 1872, stipulates that the time during which officers who entered the army prior to the 1st of May, 1870 must present themselves for the special army examination is extended from the 31st of December, 1873, to the 30th of June, 1874. Permission will accordingly be given to all lieutenants who failed at the last or any previous examination, as well as to those who have not yet presented themselves, to join the garrison classes, which commenced on the 1st of February, 1874. General officers commanding districts in which no garrison instructor is stationed will arrange with the general officer commanding at the nearest station where there is one for the officers in question to join a class of instruction. Officers failing to pass the examination by the 30th of June, 1874, will not be afterwards permitted to leave their regiments for the purpose of study.

IDYL OF THE FLOWERS.

PRETTY flowers, that wake and blow
In the balmy dawn of spring,
I, who love and miss you so,
May your gentle praises sing,
Now that winter blight and frost
Your frail loveliness have crossed.

Pansy, blue-bell, mignonette,
Crocus—first-born of the showers,
Daffodil, the violet,
Fairest of her sister flowers;

Rosy, azure, gold, or white,
Ye are still my heart's delight!

By the reedy woodland wells,
Moss-rimmed, crystalline and cold,
Foxgloves hang their painted bells,
Purple pranked with dullest gold;
(Three blooms plucked, with wishes three,
Cureth love's inconstancy.)

And those fairy flowers that shine
Cloistered in sweet solitude,
Rosy, scented columbine,
Darlings of the secret wood,
After the blue gentians, they
In my poet heart have away.

In the tangled forest ways
Where the greenest lichens hide,
When the laurel's sumptuous blaze
Kindles all the covert side,
Ghostly lilies hand in hand
With the hermit harebell stand;
Or, where interlacing ferns
Make a sunproof sylvan bower,
Star-like the pale snowwort burns,
And the speckled dragon-flower,
Merry Dryads love to wear
Them hood-wise on their yellow hair.

Dainty cups that crowd the bough,
Jewelled bells that bend the stem,
All your secret loves I know,
I by heart have gotten them,
Babbled then in silvery song
When the days were sweet and long.

Gentle flowers that bloom and fade,
As the seasons come and go,
Hearts, like spring's lost flowers, are laid
Under winter ban and snow;
Yet the rolling years shall bring
Heart and flower eternal spring. E. A. F.

PITIFUL.—There are two classes of persons in every community who are entitled to the commiseration of all good-hearted people—those who belong to the under-current, or are regarded with contempt, or those who belong to the over-current, and regard everybody and everything round them with contempt. Each class ought to colonize in a more congenial climate. Those who would remain could then enjoy the pleasures that good sense and sociability give. But of the two colonies, we cannot decide which would be the more intolerable to inhabit.

PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE BALLOT ACT.—After the election and transmission of the documents by the returning officers to the clerk of the Crown in Chancery, the papers are to be destroyed after a year, unless otherwise ordered by the House of Commons or one of the superior courts. No rejected ballot-paper is to be inspected without such an order to be granted on evidence that such inspection is necessary for a prosecution. No sealed packet of counter-foils is to be opened except by order, and such order to be made on conditions as to the inspection of the ballot paper. All documents forwarded by returning officers to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, other than ballot-papers, are to be open to inspection and

extracts obtained on payment. The production of a ballot-paper from the packet endorsed to be prima facie evidence that it refers to the elector on the register of voters of the same number.

A NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.—At one of the Newfoundland fisheries a boat and crew trying to enter a small harbour, found themselves outside a long line of breakers, in great peril. The wind and weather had changed since the boat went out in the morning, and her getting safely back seemed pretty doubtful. The people on shore saw her danger, and friends ran to and fro. Among the crowd was a large dog, which seemed fully alive to the peril of the boat, and the anxiety of those on shore. He watched the boat, surveyed the breakers, and appeared to think earnestly as any body, "What can be done?" At last he boldly plunged into the angry waters and swam to the boat. The crew thought he wanted to join them, and tried to get him on board. He would not go within their reach, but swam around, diving his head and snuffing, as in search for something. What was he up to? What did the creature mean? What did he want? "Give him the end of a rope!" cried one of the sailors, divining what was in the poor dog's brain; "that's what he wants." A rope was thrown out, the dog seized the end, in an instant turned round, and made straight for the shore, where not long after, thanks to the intelligence and sagacity of Tigor, the boat and crew were landed safe and sound.

WILL OF A MISER.

A MAN named Dennis Tolam, who died at Cork, possessed of considerable wealth, in the year 1763, left a singular will, containing the following testamentary dispositions:

"I leave to my sister-in-law four old stockings, which will be found under my mattress, to the right.

"Item—To my nephew, Michael Tarles, two odd socks and a green night-cap.

"Item—To Lieutenant John Stein a blue stocking, with a red cloak.

"Item—To my cousin, Barbara Dolan, my old boot with red flannel pocket.

"Item—To Hannah, my housekeeper, my broken water-jug."

After the death of the testator, the legatees, having been convened by the family lawyer to be present at the time which had been appointed for opening the will, each, as he or she was named, shrugged their shoulders, and otherwise expressed a contemptuous disappointment, while parties uninterested in the succession could not refrain from laughing at these ridiculous, not to say insulting, legacies. All were leaving the room, after signifying their intention of renouncing their bequests, when the last named, Hannah, having testified her indignation by kicking away the broken pitcher, a number of coins rolled out of it: the other individuals, astonished at the unexpected incident, began to think better of their determination, and requested permission to examine the articles devised to them. It is needless to say that, on proceeding to the search, the stockings, socks, pocket, etc., soon betrayed, by the weight, the value of their contents, and the hoard of the testator, thus fairly distributed, left on the minds of the legatees a very different impression of his worth.

THE KING OF ASHANTEE.—There are many curious stories afloat about the King of Ashantee's proceedings now that his territory is being invaded. The following is a fair specimen of them, and illustrates well the extreme superstition of the Ashantees, showing by what influences Koffee Calcali is popularly supposed to be guided, and on what counsellors he is supposed to rely in the present crisis:—Koffee Calcali, the story goes, recently summoned a great meeting of his Fetish men, and sought their advice as to how he should act towards the English, whether he ought to seek for peace or stake his fortunes on the result of the war. The Fetish men at first declined to give any answer until they had been guaranteed that, no matter what their reply was, their lives should not be forfeited. Having been reassured on this point, they then replied that they saw everything dark except the streets of Coomassie, which ran with blood. Koffee Calcali was dissatisfied with the vagueness of this reply, and determined to appeal still further to the oracle. He resorted to what he considered a final and conclusive test. Two he-goats were selected, one entirely black and the other of a spotless white colour, and, after due Fetish ceremonies had been performed over the two goats, they were set at each other. The white goat easily overcame and killed his opponent. Koffee Calcali, after this test, was satisfied that he was doomed to defeat at the hands of the white men. He immediately sent the embassy to Sir Garnet Wolseley to seek for peace.



[RETRIBUTION.]

FATE.

By the Author of "Nickleboy's Christmas-Box,"
"Maurice Durant," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Sweet harvest, love, of all our tears,
Sweet gathering of doubts and fears,
Sweet draught from bitter-sweetened springs,
Fast perfume round the present clings,
Safe in the harbour of our love,
We turn our gaze in gratitude above.

So it came to pass that a few weeks after and on a gloriously bright morning strings of villagers on foot and lines of more aristocratic visitors in carriages were making their way to the little church in the hollow, whose bells were carolling to the summer air with mad delight.

A quiet wedding Sir Clarence had said it was to be, but the tenants and friends of the happy pair said otherwise. Ordinary everyday folks with no romance in their lives might be married how they pleased, but, said the Riversallites, when a Sir Clarence marries a Lillian Melville 'tis quite a different matter.

If one good woman within shadow of the great hall quoted that old proverb "Happy is the bride that the sun shines on" assuredly a hundred did, as they opened their lattices and welcomed the king of the heavens.

"This be a proper sort o' morning, Jem, this be," chuckled Mike. "Where be you agoin'?"

Jem laughed at the absurdity of the question.

"Why, t' church to see the lassie and t' young master spliced, o' course; where be you, stoopid?"

"So be I," grinned Jem. "Do ye remember about t' squire's coffin?"

"Oh, dang t' coffin, man! that ere story 'll last you till ye get into your own. Come along. The missis and all on 'em a' gone up a dressed out in their best gownds and ribbons, like Sammy Sean's heifer that took t' prize. Come along, man. Hark t' the bells!"

"Very quiet indeed," said Clarence, with a happy laugh. "If this is a quiet wedding what must a public one be?"

"Ah, ah!" said the squire, rubbing his hands. "Happy times these for Rivershall, Clarence. Where's my darling? Won't you come in?" for Clarence was standing at the hall door, dressed in his blue coat and other bridal array.

"No, that would not be proper; the hall is interdicted to the bridegroom until after church you know. But I could not withstand the temptation to hover about for a glance of my darling. Ah! there she is coming down," and with a happy nod he stood aside

to watch Lillian, who, quite unconscious of his proximity, passed into the breakfast-room.

"How happy she looks, sir!" he exclaimed, squeezing the squire's hand, "and how beautiful. There goes the half-hour, and here come some carriages. Good-bye till eleven," and he ran off, leaving the squire to look after him with moist eyes.

At eleven the little church was full. The carriages of the county families in all their bravery of orange and brocade hammer-cloths were drawn up along the road.

The villagers, who took the precedence in the matter of seats, were placed near the altar. Two old dames, short in stature and crippled, had been carried to a coign of vantage by the reading-desk, where they could feast their eyes to their hearts' content.

The bishop, a distant connection of the Melvilles, was robing himself in the vestry, the parish clerk and the beadle were fussing themselves into perspiration, and the crowd, gentle and simple, were on the tip-top of expectancy.

"I hear this bride is the belle of the county," said the old Duchess of Claverworth, who had been driven down in her carriage of state all the way from Claverworth Castle to honour the nuptials. "And the bridegroom is an Apollo Belvidere the duke says. Is it true?"

"Yes, your grace; Miss Melville is very beautiful, and Sir Clarence is good looking, I think, but him I have not seen."

"Dear me, they must come to the castle; the duke is so pleased with good-looking people."

The lady with whom she was talking smiled.

"They are very proud, these Melvilles," she said, quietly, "and keep to their own set. But here they are, your grace. What a magnificent pair of grays those are!"

"A wedding present from the bridegroom," whispered a bystander.

Then the crowd outside began to cheer, and the one within to buzz and press forward.

Then the bishop, a benign and of course white-haired ecclesiastic, appeared within the altar rails. All heads were turned towards the vestry, and a sudden hush fell as Sir Clarence and Claude Ainsley walked up and took their places.

"He is very handsome indeed, my dear," murmured the duchess, in an audible whisper.

But then came the bride and all eyes and admiration were centred on her.

"What a beautiful creature!" thought the gentlemen.

"What a lovely satin!" murmured the ladies.

"And that is the squire as they call him," said the

duchess. "Ah, these old families, they always look their blood."

Then the ceremony commenced, and the bishop, in grave, ringing tones, made the two young hearts one.

Such a confusion of voices, such a clatter of horses' hoofs, such a perpetual and vociferous cheering, surely never was heard as that which accompanied the bride and bridegroom to the Hall; and as for the breakfast the county papers, and indeed most of the London ones, gave full accounts, and decided that for splendour and completeness it had eclipsed the celebrated feasts of the Imperial banquets.

Rapidly as the time passed Clarence thought the hours laggard that interposed between the time appointed for their starting, and when at last the carriage and four drew up with a flourish at the grand entrance and the time came for saying good bye, Lillian found that the parting with her father was the one dash of bitter in the cup of sweet.

"Good bye, my own," whispered the squire, holding her to him with dim eyes. "Only for a little while. Take care, Clarence, take care of her."

"That will I," he said, with eloquent eyes, and with the last cluer ringing in their ears, and with a shower of white slippers and flowers that rattled against the carriage and knocked the coachman's grand hat off, they started.

"My own!" murmured Clarence, drawing her to him and taking her blushing face in his hands ere it fell upon his bosom. "My own indeed now! Are you happy, my darling?"

"Ah, so happy!" she murmured; "this is like a dream, too bright to be true. And we are going on our pilgrimage, Clarence, the pilgrimage you promised me?"

"Yes," he replied, laughing, but with a ring of something that was not sadness but the gravity of thankfulness for present mercies. "Yes, we will go over the old ground, Lily, darling, and it shall satisfy your curiosity."

"More than curiosity," she whispered, "they will be shrines to me, sacred as the flowers of a dead friend. I long to see the places you have seen, to tread the very stones where you lived and suffered during those dreadful years."

"Well, you shall," he said, "though I would rather bury the past. You shall see them all, and I will pluck fresh joy from the bitter herbs of the past."

So it came to pass that these two bright, happy souls stood in the quiet streets of Calais, and there, pointing to a high, grim mansion, with windows hidden by frowning bars and spikes, Clarence said, quietly:

"In that house, Lillian, we spent six months—"

prison to me, a thieves' den for him. There, in that room, he would sit pondering over his plots and schemes; there he planned and devised his disguises, and, oh, shame! schooled me in the part I was to play. Often when my spirit, restrain it as I would, broke out and dared him to do his worst he has struck me. One night, when I had refused to help him plunder a foolish boy-lord, he fired at me, missing—for the purpose perhaps. Once too we were obliged to fly to the roof and cower behind those tall chimneys till the officers had gone.

"Poor Clarence!" she murmured, laying her hand on his arm.

Then he would take her to a brighter part of the queen of cities, and, leading her into some grand saloon, say, with a smile and a sigh:

"Here we played the part of Italian nobles. I speechless, sullen, and with the tormenting desire to denounce my master, Melchior all smiles, courtesy, an breathing that fall charm which you know of. Here we were the honoured guests, and here also he plundered a dozen of the earth's great ones of their jewels and money."

"Poor Clarence!" again. "And you were helpless?"

"What could I do? Tied hand and foot to him, never from his side, ignorant of the commonest usages of the world, I was as helpless a tool as any of wood or iron. And he knew it."

Then they went to Italy, and there Clarence could summon a host of memories, and take the eager and beautiful girl to a hundred scenes with which his misery had made him acquainted.

"Here," he would say, as they stood at the Campagna of Rome and watched the gay cavalier wending to the Colosseum in the daily drive, "here we rode daily, he the great mighty Melchior, and his son. We were respectable then, and his snares were set at the gaming-tables. He could cheat with a marked card or a hidden ace with the adroitness and sleight-of-hand of a magician. Often I was placed opposite, leaning over his opponent's chair and talking small nothings as a light-hearted boy should. My part was to signal to him what cards his adversary held. Ah! once, driven mad with the agony and shame, I misled him. I signalled wrong and lost him the enormous stakes."

"Poor Clarence! He beat you! Oh, my darling!"

"Worse," said Clarence, smiling. "He starved me. Hunger is a sharp incentive and a terrible daunter. To disobey and dare him after that were to seek and find death. The loss of that coup compelled him to fly. We hid here in the suburbs, in the secret dens of the lazarous, and there we lived as the tigers live."

"Oh, take me to see it, Clarence!" she said, earnestly. "I want to know all that you suffered, to have it brought before me, that I may love you the more. Let me go. If it was not too bad for you to endure for months and months it is not too bad for me to see and shudder at."

Her word, her mere wish was law to him, and so, tenderly and lovingly, he took her to the scums of the earth's Temple, the back streets and alleys of Rome.

"Here," said he, "is the house. We lived here, starved here rather, for two months, living on a share of the plunder obtained by his boon companions. He was known here, and always found a band of ruffians to his hand. Sometimes they quarrelled. On this staircase I have seen one stabbed and flung over into the court below like a dog."

She shuddered and clung close to him.

"Here," she said, "on this spot?" and she looked down upon the grimed stairs and the court shimmering white and hot in the noonday sun.

"Ay, here on this spot," he replied. "Can you not recognize it? He knew no mercy, stayed not his hand in shedding blood a moment. Passion with him was paramount, revenge, jealousy, lust were never bridled. Look down, my darling, see where the miserable creatures, hungry, unloved, and hopeless, crawl in the sun, and think of our happy Rivershall and contented, honest people. Look—ah! what is this?"

He broke off suddenly, started, and leaned forward over the balustrade.

His eyes fell on a slouching, bent figure, crawling through the patch of glaring sunlight.

Lilian, already excited and strained, uttered a cry of alarm, and a

"What is it, Clarence?"

At the sound of her voice, which pierced the sleepy, sweltering air, the crawling creature below turned a white, livid face upwards and shot a glance of inquiry that instantly turned to fiery hate from his flashing, restless, burning eyes.

"Clarence!" she breathed, faintly, "it is he!"

Clarence seemed spell-bound, and, stretching over, watched the figure till it had disappeared, then with a long breath turned to her.

"It is he," he said, solemnly; "his punishment has begun in this life."

They commenced to descend, silently, but with a deep gravity in their hearts.

Presently Lilian stole an upward look into his grave face and whispered:

"He looked hungry—starving, Clarence."

"Ay," he said.

She waited a few minutes.

They had reached the broad paved court, and were in sight of the carriage that had brought them.

"He is dying of hunger perhaps, Clarence."

He nodded, then, pressing her hand that nestled within his, turned to a woman who had spoken to the crawling figure as it had passed, and addressing her in Italian asked her if she knew where the man she had spoken to lived.

"With me, signor."

"He is poor?" asked Clarence.

"Sanceta Maria!" replied the woman, throwing up her hands with expressive pantomime. "Poor! Signor, he does not eat twice in four Avas."

"Starves three days a week!" muttered Clarence.

Then, scanning the woman's face keenly, he drew out his purse and emptied its contents into her outstretched hands.

"You will take care of him?"

"Si, signor; he shall have food and drink, but, alas, he will not eat; oft-times he turns from the good food the fathers send him. He is of a disturbed spirit, signora," turning to Lilian, who stood listening, "and dreams of nights, the blessed Mary have mercy on his soul."

"Amen," said Clarence.

And with that sole of forgiveness in their hearts the two whom the man had sought to injure turned away.

But their heartiness was not all gloom or a resurrection of the past. Clarence when they had visited the house where he had made his escape from his life of degradation promised to show his darling some of the gladness and brightness of the Eternal City.

So they started with a ball, and before Lilian had been in the room half an hour a host of conquests were made, and the victims came hovering round eager for an introduction to the English miladi.

"Who is she?" they asked; "what magnificent jewels! Happy fellow that husband of hers. Ah, and does he not think so? I thought these Inglesse never loved, that the art had left them. Ay, they look devoted."

And the Italian belles were not far wrong. They were devoted to each other, and if no other Inglesse could love these two could.

Lilian was delighted with her first Italian ball, and made merry at Clarence's expense.

"Silly boy," she murmured, stroking his hand, "you have no taste, or rather very bad taste. How could you pass over these beautiful Italians for one poor, plain English girl?"

"Because—" he said. "Shall I tell you the reason? I was in love."

"In love!" she repeated, "why," with a pretty little laugh that was nervous notwithstanding its sweetness, "why, that was before you knew me."

"Before I knew Miss Lilian of Rivershall, Berkshire," he replied, laying a slight stress on the word "knew." "Yes, I was in love. All the Italian and French beauties shone upon me in full glory, and moved me not. I was in love, Lily, and the face in my heart outshone and eclipsed all that met my eyes."

"Yes," she said, in a low voice. "I thought you had told me all—all your life, Clarence," she murmured, turning away her face and feeling just a little sorry that he had not bestowed his very first love on her. "I thought you had told me all, and yet—yet you say you were in love before you knew me."

"I was quite a boy," he sighed, as if in excuse. "An unfledged boy, fresh to the world and nature."

Lilian's face drooped.

"A boy! Who loves better than a boy? He is unwearied, high and true of heart and quick to love fervently. And you loved then?"

"I believe so, with all my heart and soul."

She turned her face still farther, and felt that the tears were welling up.

Clarence drew her to him and murmured in her ear:

"Shall I tell you how it fell? I was a boy—you know of what metal—ignorant, sad with a weight upon my chest. My master took me to perform my task. We entered the drive in the park, an accident occurred. Stepping from the cab, I got entangled amongst the carriages, was knocked down and fainted. When I opened my eyes it was to see above me a girl's face—an angel's I thought, and fancied by reason that I was in Heaven."

"Such a face, Lily—you are trembling, my dar-

ling!—so sweet, so pure, so true, so pityingly was it bent over mine that I would have died that instant, boy as I was, if by so doing I could have kept the memory of it in Heaven. That face crept into my heart, filled up the blank pages of my existence, sailed in the dark heavens of the future as a star to lead and guide me. I followed it blindly, often mistakingly, as mortals will, but at last it drew me to itself. I came and won; and now—hold up your face, my darling—I hold it here to shine on my bosom, my star, my Lily, my love!"

Happy and light of heart in their love they came to England. A surprise was in store for them there that was another jewel in their casket of joys.

"And now for some news," said the squire, looking from one to the other of his children, as he called them, from his place at the head of the table.

"News! Oh, pray tell us, papa. It is only fair. Consider what a budget we have spread out for you, have we not, Clarence?"

"Yes, and now requite me. Has old Jack come into a fortune or been caught in a civil speech?"

"Neither," said the squire. "It concerns another friend of yours, Mr. Walker."

"Jeremiah Walker," said Lilian, imitating him with pleasant mimicry. "Good news I hope, for he deserves it."

"That's as he may consider it," said the squire, laughing. "Well, not to keep you in suspense longer, Mr. Jeremiah Walker has conquered our household dragon, and the two Walkers are to become one."

"What!" said Clarence, with delighted astonishment.

"A fact," said the squire, laughing. "How it was managed I can't tell. I think Mr. Walker got over the old lady by praising her cookery—especially in the muffin department."

Lilian laughed.

"I am so glad, and yet sorry for one thing—we shall lose her."

"No, you won't," said her father, pouring out a glass of wine for her as he spoke. "You will gain another faithful servant instead. You left the finding of a steward to me, Clarence."

"Entirely, sir," said Clarence.

"Well, Mr. Walker was always down here, and always grumbling about his business, declaring that he couldn't keep away, and that he was ruining himself for it—all nonsense of course—that at last, by way of a joke, I said:

"Well, Mr. Walker, better stay altogether, and take Sir Clarence's stewardship."

"Do you mean it, Sir Ralph?" he said, with that sharp way of his, sticking a straw in his mouth and commencing to bite it.

"Not wishing to offend him, I laughed the speech off. He looked disappointed and to my astonishment said, rather respectfully:

"Sir Ralph, you see I'm quite upset. If you did mean it seriously I'd 'ay done and thank you."

"But," I said, "you are a wealthy man, Mr. Walker, with a large and increasing business."

"That's just it," he replied, with a comical look. "I am well—tired in, I think he said—and I don't want any more business. But I'm not the sort to do nothing and enjoy it. It will kill me. Now if I could come down here, settle down with something to do, look after and fidget about, I should live long enough to disgust you all, and be happy."

"I laughed."

"Another thing, Sir Ralph," said he, with the most comical grimace I ever saw, and that set me off laughing, "you see I'm in love—yes, it's very laughable, I daresay, but it's the fact. She's a fine woman, Sir Ralph, no nonsense about her, and cooks a muffin equal to—well, myself. She won't leave Rivershall and the young mistress—and I love her for it—and I can't make up my mind to leave her. So that's the long and the short of it. Give me the stewardship—I'll do my duty by the young squire, bless his heart, and Mrs. Walker can still be housekeeper and Mrs. Jeremiah too!"

"I agreed, and he is to be here to-morrow."

"Good news. It is glorious news, the best news you could give us I think," said Clarence.

"Not the best, even yet there is something better, but I reserve that for Claude's telling."

"And he will be here?" said Lilian, smiling.

"In five minutes," said the squire; "he would not come to dinner, you know his thoughtful way. 'You will want them all to yourself for a while,' said he, 'but I will come and drink a glass of wine, and wish them a happy return afterwards, and,—ah, here he is."

Clarence sprang up as the door opened and grasped the bronzed hands with both of his, but he released one for Lilian, who ran to take it.

There were tears in all their eyes, but the staunch and steadfast friend shook them from his, and drew the happy couple to the table.

"All back to the nest again," he said, "happy

birds, happy birds. Sir Ralph, we'll drink their health. 'Long life and sweet happiness.'

Then they drew together round the table, and talked fast and happily.

Claude rose, but not until the clock had struck twelve.

"More of your travels to-morrow," he cried, with a laugh; "you are enticing us into bad hours. Good night, good night."

"No, no, where are you going?" exclaimed Clarence. "You sleep here, do you not?"

Claude laughed and glanced slyly at the squire.

"No," he said, "I must be going. Good night."

"Oh, stay at the Hall!" pleaded Lillian, with a tender persuasiveness.

"I can't, birdie," he said.

"But where are you going?" asked Clarence, "not to an inn nor to London?" and his face clouded.

"You are not off on one of your wild trips again. Oh, Claude, you promised me, or half promised me, you would not leave England again!"

"Neither will I," said he; "I am going home."

"Home!" said Lillian, with surprise.

"Ay, to the Towers. This is the squire's little surprise, as if you would be pleased! I have purchased the Towers of the Besants and am settled near my true friends for the rest of my life."

Here let us leave them. In health, with wealth, happy in each other's love, surrounded by friends and serene in the benediction of useful lives and approving consciences.

It is growing towards dusk, and the heavy, sickening heat of the close, crowded, evil-smelling Italian city has reached its climax and beginning to relax its tortures.

Close to suffocation it is in the broader, better parts of the Eternal City, but in the narrow, flint-paved courts and alleys the fumes of the sun-plague make the air poisonous and the heart sick.

Worse still is the pestiferous region of lazarettoes—the Cleoni market place, where the vile odours of the putrid meat mingle as it were with the fierce heat and the dust-laden air, and make existence in such an atmosphere a torment. Yet there are some lives dragging at their painful chains even here!

At the doors of the dark, fast-decaying houses, that lean forward toward each other threateningly, a few miserable lazarettoes lie or lounge, caked in dirt, and famishing with hunger. Worse still is it within, where the air grows even closer and more oppressive than without, and beats against the cracked lips like a tangible substance.

Creep within that dark dwelling, descend carefully the rotting steps, and, groping with outstretched hand along the wall, bend down and look in the dim light at this remnant of humanity lying stretched as if already sensation had for ever gone. See the wasted face from which all colour, all expression has flown, leaving one unbroken line of livid white. Watch the dark eyes as they glitter like fireflies, living things in pain, rolling from side to side, and resting for a moment on the patch of twilight at the door. The lips are blue and shrivelled, as if scorched up by the hot breath that painfully forced itself through them. They open, the parched tongue speaks:

"Water! water! water! For the love of Heaven water!"

No one heeds his cry. Is there no one to hear?

Yes, as the lips let out the last word a figure that might once have been a woman glides in, gropes through the falling darkness and kneels by the bed.

"Water!" cries the parched tongue.

The woman lifts her head from her bosom and looks at the livid face.

"Dying," she croaks, hoarsely, "dying like me. Water? There is none. The air is dying for it!"

The fierce, rolling eyes settle on her pinched, wasted face. She cannot withstand the gaze. She rises from her desponding, despairing posture, and gropes her way out.

A fountain throws its precious burden on cool stones and carved marble a hundred yards from the spot.

She takes an earthenware cup and fills it, then gropes, slouching slowly like one weak with pain and hunger, to the stretched-out figure within the house.

She sinks beside the pallet, and holds out the cup. The hands have already parted with life.

They cannot raise themselves even to clutch the cup of the precious water.

She laughs a hoarse, choking laugh, and presses the cup to his lips.

As the water runs down, and nearly touches them, a man outside passes with a lantern.

Its beams fling themselves into the room, and suddenly, as if by magic, reveal the white features to the ministering woman.

She looks, starts back with a fearful oath, and dashes away the cup.

The dying creature sees the water go from him, and rolls his eyes like a dying beast to hers.

Implovingly, pitously, the lips wail out the old cry:

"Water! Water! For the love of Heaven, water!"

Then the woman turns to the light and strikes her face with a sharp cry of ferocity.

"Look," she croaks. "You ask for water. I pour it out—spill it!—as you, Melchior, spilt and wasted my life!"

And with a fiendish laugh she pours drop by drop the precious thirst-healing fluid on the dusty floor.

The dying figure raises itself on its elbow and glares at her.

"Kate!" he cried. "Alive! Here!"

Then, throwing up the paralyzed hand with a look that is worse than any cry could be, the wasted figure falls forward—dead!

The woman pours out the water still, then as the cup drops from her hand she sinks beside the bed. As she falls her hand touches the cold, clammy one, that hangs so powerless.

She stares at it, laughs, then cries.

The fever that has been hovering about grasps her now, and she flings herself across the dead body of the man she had loved, served, and tortured in his last hour, and spends hers echoing his fearful cry:

"Water, water!"

THE END.

MISS GRIGG'S WEDDING.

Yes, miss, certainly. I lived with Mrs. Birch—Miss Grigg that was before she married Mr. Birch. And I knew all about that affair. It was very singular indeed, very. I'm not sure that I ought to mention it, for if a lady's maid can't hold her tongue she can't find good places. Dear me, I'm no talker about other people's affairs. Bushels of pearl powder and quart of rouge have I applied with my own hands and never so much as hinted at. And I did live with a lady once that took arsenic regularly for her complexion. That's no secret, for she took too much one day, by accident, and died.

There was an inquest, and it all came out. It's well it did, for suspicion pointed to her husband. Somehow it always seems to strike a jury that a husband is the likeliest person to wish a wife out of the way.

But this isn't anything about paint; Miss Grigg, being on the stage, made no secret of that. She played queens and suchlike characters, miss. I've often had orders given me, and gone with my young man to see her act. And when she was haughty and curled her nose like, miss, and looked at folks over her shoulder, and talked down in her throat like a pigeon gurgling, she was splendid, miss. It made one think how nice it would be to be a queen and take airs over everybody.

Well, Miss Grigg was engaged to be married. Mr. Birch had fallen in love with her when she was playing Hamlet's ma. Perhaps you've seen the play, miss. The young man objects to his ma's getting married a second time, so I seemed to make out, and acted very impudent; acting most impudent to his ma and his step-ma, and carrying on awful. And there was a poor young lady quite out of her mind too, that afterward got drowned.

Well, she was playing Hamlet's ma, and Mr. Birch fell in love with her, and sent her a letter, and called and made an offer, all in no time. She accepted him of course, and the preparations for the wedding began. I don't think any lady ever had so many dresses before.

Silks and satins and velvets and laces. Dear, dear, Madame Almece's whole establishment was hard at work for a month; and if I'd had twenty fingers instead of only ten I'd have had use for them all.

At last everything was finished. The trunks were packed, fifteen of 'em, miss, and fourteen were to go that morning; and one—the one with the wedding and travelling-dresses, was, of course, to be left, and go with the bride when she started, next day.

She was to be married at ten o'clock in church, and then drive home, have a splendid breakfast, change her dress, and catch the three o'clock train.

Of course, I saw to the trunks, and I was very careful; but just when I was needed most, just as the trunks were going down stairs, Miss Grigg called me.

Miss Grigg was a lady who didn't like to wait. I went to her at once, miss, as was my duty, and I said to Mary Danster, the chambermaid:

"Mary, watch that black trunk, and see that the men don't carry it off!"

Mary must have misunderstood, I suppose, for after I'd been for two yards of blue ribbon of exactly such a shade as she wanted, and got back, I found that she had sent off the black trunk first of all, and was very proud of having been so careful. The trunks were all miles away by that time.

There was nothing for it but to tell Miss Grigg.

She flew at me, miss. I didn't blame her for being angry. I would forgive her in such a case. She flew at me violent, miss, and then, miss, she had spasms. She beat the sofa, she tore her hair, she screamed, and me all the while saying:

"Remember your eyes, miss. Think how you'll look. Your nose is swelling up dreadful, miss."

Finally she came to and bathed her face. And says she:

"Flora, what—shall—I—do?"

"I don't know, miss," said I, "unless you put off the wedding until you telegraph for the trunk."

"No," said she, "that's unlucky; besides one never knows. None ain't to be depended on."

"You might borrow a dress," said I.

"As if I'd be married in one that didn't fit," said she.

"Stop, don't speak a word. I've an idea!"

She sat with one finger on her lip for a while. Then she said:

"My embroidered dressing-gown. The white one. That's here?"

"In the bureau, miss," said I.

"Very well," said she. "I'll be married in that. Telegraph for the trunk, Flora."

"The white dressing-gown, miss?" said I, nearly astonished out of my senses.

"Yes," said she, "the white dressing-gown. Goose, you don't think I'm going to be married in church in that. I won't put off the wedding; and I won't stand up before a crowd in anything but my white satin dress! But I'll be married at the appointed hour for all that. Go, telegraph for the trunk, and come back at once."

When I came back I found Miss Grigg in bed and the doctor sent for. He was puzzled, I could see that. He couldn't tell what was the matter, and Miss Grigg was too faint to speak. He questioned me. I said she had been very much agitated. He prescribed something and went off, bidding me send for him if she seemed worse.

Mr. Birch, having been sent for, came to the house in a terrible fright, pale as a sheet, to ask how she was.

I took him down her love; and she was very ill.

Then Miss Grigg gave orders that she was to be left alone with her faithful Flora.

And we were left alone.

I can't say I was surprised when she sat up in bed and said, briskly:

"Lock the door, Flora. I'm tired of lying on my back. I've taken them in, haven't I? You see what I am about now?"

"Exactly, miss," said I, "to be too ill to be married when the time comes."

"No," said she, "to be ill enough to be married in the white dressing-gown. I'm going to be married on my dying bed, Flora."

I gave a scream, and she laughed; and then she made a supper of biscuits and wine, and she threw the medicine out of the window.

Early next day the doctor came.

I answered his question as to what sort of a night the patient had passed, by saying she had been "much the same." Then I gave him a little note she had written to him.

I knew afterwards what was in it. She told him "that rather than leave the world without keeping her vow to him she would be married on her dying bed."

I powdered her up well, miss, and I dressed her in the embroidered dressing-gown, with tuberoses at the throat. I pulled down the green shades and darkened the room.

She arranged the pillows to prop herself up with and then skipped into bed.

"Give me my pearl bracelets," she said, "and the handsomest of those handkerchiefs and all my rings; and, Flora, mind you must sob all through the ceremony. I'm going to be calm."

We hadn't five minutes more, but just as the first knock came at the door she whispered:

"Oh, dear, if I only could have slow music. Couldn't you catch that Traviata organ, Flora, and get him to play for half an hour outside the window? He's always near here. Flora, I'll leave you something handsome if you do."

I found that man, and he ground out his half hour's worth.

Short as the time was all the necessary additional arrangements had been made by Mr. Birch.

The clergyman was a very nice, neat, near-sighted old gentleman. Mr. Birch was the dreadfulest sight—pale as a ghost, and shaking from head to foot.

the groom's-man looked dreadfully sorry. The four or five intimate friends looked as though they were at a funeral; and to see her with her calm smile and her powdered face, one hand against her heart, the other in his! I was glad I'd been told to sob; I had to do something. And there was the slow music outside, and the room darkened so solemn-like. And so they were married.

"I feel," said Miss Grigg, slowly, "that this, perhaps the last moment of my life, is very sweet. To die thus, with my hand in yours—ah! Dear friends, adieu. Flora, my faithful maid, take this ring." I saw her pick out the cheapest; but no matter. "Remember me by it. Now—leave us."

Then everybody kissed her, and went out of the room sobbing. In a moment more there was a scream; Mr. Birch had fainted away. It took an hour to bring him to.

Yes, miss, of course Miss Grigg—I mean to say Mrs. Birch—recovered at once. And that's the whole story. I'm the only one that knows it, and I wouldn't mention it to any one but you, ma'am.

A. R. C.

ADA MUSGROVE.

"Will you ask whether Mr. Graham will see a stranger?"

The clerk spoken to nodded, arose, and went into an inner office. The stranger remained, leaning against the railings of the desk, his hand trifling with the little door that shut outsiders from the sanctum within. He was a tall, fair man, of thirty, with close-cropped hair and beard. His shoulders were broad, his features aristocratic, but there was an odd air about him that had puzzled the clerk, and would have perplexed any one. It was something that could not be defined, but it pervaded the whole man: a suppressed look, as of one forced in some way to hide his feelings; a manner of standing and holding his hat which had something apologetic in it.

"Mr. Graham will see you, sir," said the clerk, returning and opening the door. "In the office to the right."

The stranger passed into the room indicated, and closed the door behind him; then standing with his back against it, he fumbled with his hat in the same odd manner in which he had handled it in the outer office, and instead of speaking looked at the gentleman behind the desk with eyes that had a measureless appeal in them.

The other did not rise from his chair, nor hold out his hand, nor even speak for some moments; each looked at the other, that was all. But it was the elder who broke the spell at last.

"So," he said, "it is you, James."

"Yes, it is I," said the other. "Haven't you a word for me, William?"

"I have a good many words that you might not like to hear," said William Graham. "I really can't say I'm glad to see you, delighted, honoured, and all that, you know."

"I don't expect any one to be glad," said the other. "I know I've disgraced the family, but I've been punished for it. Fifteen years, William—think of that!—fifteen years of prison life and prison fare and prison friends! I'd have given my life to undo what I did, even before it was found out; and I never meant to keep the money."

"We know the story," said the merchant. "You were in a position of confidence—you betrayed it. It's the old affair. I've had it happen in my own office. I can't feel any sentimental pity for a fellow like you. What brings you here, James?"

Shifting his hat from hand to hand, looking from under his eyebrows in an abject fashion, pitiable to contemplate when one saw in what a gentlemanly mould he had been cast, James Graham answered:

"I was twenty when I went to prison. I'm five-and-thirty now. The outside world has been a blank to me for all these years. I want work. I want you to give it to me—any honest work, William. I'm a good book-keeper, but I'll be a porter, an errand man, anything."

"Oh, no, not anything here," said the elder. "You've reckoned without your host, James. You are no brother of mine. I cast you off when you became a felon. For the sake of the poor woman who called you 'son' I'll give you some money, enough to live on for a week or two. I will never give you another penny—don't expect it. I will have you sent away if you come here again."

The prison taint was so strong upon the other man that his pride was not aroused yet; he fumbled with his hat, slunk limply against the door, looked abjectly from under his eyebrows again, and asked:

"How is Sister Jessie?"

"Well," said the merchant.

"Can you tell me where she lives?" asked his brother.

"No," said the merchant. "Jessie is married, and has tried to forget the terrible grief you gave her. You are the last person a respectable brother-in-law would care to see."

"I'll ask you one more question," said James, in a faltering voice. "Ada Musgrove—what has become of her? Is she living? Is she married?"

"I have no information for you," said the merchant, harshly. "Here are ten pounds. If you are careful, you will get work before it is gone. Remember, you'll have not another penny from my hands. Take it and go, and don't come back again."

He flung the money down upon the table, but there was a spark of manhood in his brother's breast even yet; he could not take a gift so proffered.

Suddenly the abject look upon his face changed to one of wrath and hate.

Tall as he was, he seemed to grow a head taller as he drew his shoulders back, and glaring at his brother, threw the money that lay before him into his face.

"Confound you, keep your money!" he said. "I don't want it. I want nothing from you or any one. I came for help, it is true; for help to be an honest man. I've been among the outcasts of the world so long that I've lost all kinship with you decent folk; but I thought a brother might hold out a hand to draw me back. You refused it. Money! Why, look at these hands, these shoulders—look at me! I can earn money somehow. And, by Heaven! if this is all your respectability and Christianity amounts to, I don't care if I see no more of it. There are plenty to welcome me, and you have driven me to them. Remember that, son of my mother! You!"

He thrust his hat upon his head and dashed out of the room, striding through the outer office with no heed of any one there, and clanging the door behind him as he departed.

One dark night, a few weeks later, James Graham, in full fellowship with a gang of burglars, was receiving instructions from a companion how to enter and conceal himself in a house that had been marked for robbery. The lesson was given in front of the doomed house itself, and after his companion had left him Graham muttered:

"Yes, I belong to the fraternity now. I am here to rob this house. I have the mask and the pistol in my pocket. I have my little dark lantern too. I'm a burglar, and the burglars were the only men who welcomed me back out of prison. My brother turned his back on me. My brother—I wonder what my poor mother would say if she could see me now? If she knew—"

He stopped himself with an oath—seemed, with a motion of his hand, to drive away the thoughts that were upon him—and in a moment more had mounted to the window indicated by his comrades; and, finding that it opened easily, had clambered in. His shoes were noiseless. He made no sound as he moved; and, guiding himself by the lantern's light, looked for a place of concealment. It soon presented itself. A long wardrobe, with a door at either end. In this, behind a very curtain of suspended garments, he hid himself.

He heard, after a while, a baby cry, and in a minute more a step ran across the entry, and a ray of light glanced through the key-hole at one end of the wardrobe.

"Ada," cried a lady's voice, "come here. Baby is wide awake, and I can't leave him."

Then another rustle, another step, and there were two women very near him—so near that he could almost hear them breathe.

"I'm so glad you came to-day, Ada," said the other, "when I am all alone. Charles was called away so unexpectedly this morning! I declare the thought of that accident makes me ill, and I am nervous all alone in the house at night, dear. Besides being always glad to see you, I am so thankful to have you to-night!"

"And I am never nervous, Jessie," said the other. "I'm as good as a man about the house, mamma says. I've hunted imaginary burglars with a poker many a night. Mamma is always imagining burglars, dear soul!"

"Don't speak of them," said the matron, who was evidently quieting her child as only a mother can. "This house would be more of a temptation to them to-night than it has ever been before since we lived here. There are two thousand pounds in that safe, Ada. Charlie hadn't time to deposit them in the bank. They telegraphed that Mr. Bird might be dying."

As she made this confession the man concealed so near her listened with his very heart in his ears; but it was not to the statement so well calculated to rejoice a burglar's heart. That was forgotten. He heard only the voices and the names these two women called each other by. Ada! That had been the

name of the girl he loved. Jessie! That was his sister's name. After all, what was it to him? Like his brother, the latter had cast him off, of course, and no doubt Ada only remembered him with horror. Still, how like the voices were. Could it be? He stole forward, and knelt down with his eye to the keyhole, but he could only see part of a woman's figure swaying to and fro as she rocked her infant on her bosom.

"Dear little fellow," said the voice of the other woman. "How sweet babies are."

She came forward now and knelt down, and he saw her profile.

It was Ada Musgrove—older, for he had left her a girl of sixteen, and found her a woman of thirty, but handsomer than ever.

"You love children so, that I wonder you don't marry," said the matron; and now James Graham knew that it was his sister who spoke. "I know William wants you to have him. He always has loved you. And, Ada, he can give you all that makes life happy."

James Graham's cheeks flushed in the darkness. He hated the world more than ever now. He hated his kinsfolk—this cruel brother and sister of his most of all.

"He cannot give me the one thing necessary for wedded happiness—love for him," said Ada. "No, Jessie; I have never said this to you before, but I must say it now. I loved poor James too well ever to love any other man while I know he lives."

"Ah, Ada," cried Jessie, stooping over her. "It is a comfort to me to know you still remember my poor brother. I thought I was the only living being who still loved him."

And then James Graham, listening on the other side of the door, heard these two women weeping together, and for him.

"Yes, Ada," said his sister, "and though poor James is so sadly disgraced, still when he returns I will be glad to see him, and this shall be his home if he will, and my good husband will help him to win back the place among good men that he lost so long ago. William is cruel to him; but then we women are softer. When he is free again I trust he will come straight to us. I fear William would hurt him by some reproachful speech. He will be free very soon, Ada."

The man who had stolen into that house to rob it—the man of whom they spoke—could bear no more, his heart was softened as it had not been since he was a little child. It was as if the angels had spoken to him.

Then he remembered why he was there, and kneeling and kissing the door that lay between him and those dear women who had saved him from desperation, he crept away, and finding his way to the window which he had entered, he departed as he had come, vowing to lead an honest life, and sometimes, perhaps when he was dying, to see these two dear creatures once again; at least, always the memory of their looks and words would keep his heart tender and his life pure, lonely as might be his lot.

With these thoughts in his mind, he stood on the ground, and remembered with a pang who would arrive soon and what their errand would be; and that while he scorned to betray them, he must stand between them and their purpose, and save his sister's home, perhaps her life, from their hands.

He felt in his bosom for his pistol; he would not use it until the last; but he must stand between those women and all harm.

He knew well enough the unforgiving ferocity of those with whom he had to deal, and he muttered a little prayer for aid—the first he had breathed for many a year—as he heard soft footsteps approaching.

"He is opening his eyes," said a voice.

James Graham heard it and wondered what had happened and why he could not turn himself and who spoke.

Then came the remembrance of a quarrel, a conflict, and the report of a pistol. He knew all now. His fellow burglars had shot him and left him for dead. But where was he now?

"Ada, dear," said the voice again, "I think he is opening his eyes."

Then they did open, and James Graham saw two women bending over him.

"James," said one, "do you know sister Jessie?"

The other only burst into tears.

"Yes, I know you both," said he, faintly. "How did I come here? I am so full of wonder. How did you know me?"

"We found you wounded—dead, we thought, at our gate," said Jessie. "It was Ada knew you first."

"Dear Jessie," he said, "dear Ada!"

"We don't know how it happened," she said, "When you are better you must tell us. Only we

have you back, and you shall never go away again; never."

He knew he never should. He knew it did not matter whether he told them how he had come to them now. He knew that in a little while he should neither see their faces nor know their voices, but he was very happy. A foretaste of Heaven was given to him.

"They have been terrible years," he said; "terrible years. All that while I have never heard from you, but I have you now. Come closer; I can't see you very well. There's a mist before my eyes. I want Jessie to kiss me."

The sister flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him over and over again. Then he turned to Ada Musgrove.

"If I were going to live I should not ask it," he said, "but you used to kiss me long ago, Ada. Will you kiss me now, my dear, just once more?" She took him in her arms.

"Heaven is merciful," he said; "more merciful than man. Perhaps we shall meet again, darling."

These were the last words he ever said.

M. K. D.

THE SIAMESE TWINS.

IN 1850 Barnum exhibited the twins and out of their salaries they managed to amass some thousands of pounds. With this money the brothers purchased two adjoining plantations in North Carolina, assumed the surname of Bunker and, strange to say, married. Their courtship, it is stated, was done by proxy, and the wives, Englishwomen, who had only seen their husbands once at a show in London, were selected by the twins from likenesses forwarded by an agent. At the time of their marriage the brothers were forty-four years of age and their wives, who were sisters, respectively twenty-six and twenty-eight.

Their domestic life is said to have been very peculiar. The wives lived in separate homes and the husbands alternated, staying one week at Chang's house and the next at Eng's. Each looked after his plantation and other business during the weeks of his living at his own place, and the visiting brother was not supposed to interfere. The families increased rapidly, Chang having six children and Eng five; of these four were deaf mutes, though not deformed, while the rest were strong and healthy. The domestic life of the brothers was not happy, and serious difficulties occasionally took place, resulting in the estrangement of the families for long periods. They were slave owners and cruel masters, and during the war manifested strong southern proclivities. At the end of the rebellion, their wealth was very much reduced, and they again went into the show business with only partial success.

The brothers were of medium size and of peculiarly repulsive faces. Chang was the most robust and good natured, while Eng was often ill and morose. Chang also was the mental superior, although both were ignorant and had intelligence that scarcely rose above low cunning. As they grew old, the almost certainty of the death of one resulting in that of the other rendered them fretful and nervous. While in Europe, they consulted the best physicians regarding the possibility of a separate existence; but when the ligature was compressed so that all transfusion of blood between them stopped, Eng fainted, proving that neither could sustain a separate circulation. About a year ago Chang had a paralytic stroke which rendered his health the worse of the two; and as a relief from suffering, he drank freely. His death occurred first; and the shock, or more probably the cessation of circulation, affected Eng so strongly that delirium, followed by stupor, almost immediately set in. At the end of two hours he also expired.

HAPPY IN THEIR WORK.—In order that people may be happy in their work, these things are needed: They must be fit for it; they must not do too much of it; and they must have a sense of success in it, not a double sense, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been well done, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

A MORAL MYSTERY.—It is questionable if there are not souls, whose quiet sympathies, whose very clearness of moral vision, whose easy assumption of heroic moods, is their snare and their doom. That is one of the most mysterious of moral mysteries, a thing that should make us all ashamed and fearful. Perhaps you know one or two characters thus vaguely indicated. Their conversation, their whole tone, when you are present with them, never fails to touch the highest; but when you get away into

yourself there comes to you a subtle, indefinable sense of insincerity. You drive from you with scorn the ghastly suspicion in your own mind; you defend them with sudden zeal against the coarse insinuations of those who know them not so well as you do. Their recurring presence, at last, dissipates all haunting doubts; but in absence these return, and return again, until the bitter cup is drunk. Their once gracious companionship has no longer power to exorcise that demon, and you go on with your lives, hiding a new pain in your hearts. Well for us then, if, smitten with dismay, we turn back into our own souls, and search, with trembling, for the shadow of our sin.

THE TUBEROSES.

"Yes, I am pretty," she said. She put her hands on either side of the mirror-frame, and made a little mouth at it as though she were about to kiss the fair reflection. "Very pretty, and I'm glad of it. What would be the use of living if one were not pretty?"

She turned away from the glass after this, and sat down on a little ottoman with her arms folded, and the frown of reflection on her smooth forehead.

"It seems a pity that I must grow old and faded," she said; "but I know I'm only mortal. I'd like to be a girl for ever; but since I can't, I must marry somebody. I'm twenty-one. It's time I thought seriously about it, I know. Last year I had five suitors. Two I refused. They are married, both of them. There are left three. Do I like any one of them enough to marry him?"

"Three," she said, in a moment more. "I could say four if I chose; only, of course, I don't count the little music-teacher." Then she pulled her watch from her belt.

"Half-past three," she said. "In ten minutes more he will be done teaching that stupid cousin of mine her piece."

"Yes," she said again, "if I choose to count the little music-master amongst my beaux I could. Only, of course, I don't. Of course, I don't, sir," apostrophizing some unseen individual. "Don't be vain and ridiculous, and fancy that I do."

"Firstly," she said, touching one rosy forefinger's tip to the other, "you are not at all good-looking. Secondly, you are as poor as a church mouse. Thirdly, you are nobody but a poor music-teacher, and I am Miss Van Velt. We are proud of our family; we move in the first society. I shouldn't have much respect for myself if I counted little Devoe among my beaux. Last year an Italian count fell in love with me. A German baron—oh, wasn't he funny!—popped the question one night in broken English, and set me laughing so that I couldn't answer him."

"My loafie mees," that's how he begun. Oh, dear! he was ugly, and he smelt of smoke, but he was a baron. Yes, I can marry well, when I do marry. No little music-teacher for me; but, dear me, how he likes me! A minute more now and he'll go into the conservatory, just because he fancies he'll find me there, and he'll pretend he comes for a tuberose and a leaf of geranium to wear in his button-hole. It's only to see me, I know. And if he finds me there, I shall cut the flower for him, and he'll say, 'Thank you,' and put it in his button-hole. He always does. Fond of tuberoses? Nonsense! He's fond of me. And the tuberoses are at the farthest end of the conservatory. It takes longest to get them. That's why he chooses them. I won't go down to-day. I declare I won't. There, the lesson is over! I hear his step on the stairs."

Then she looked in the glass, and went at once to the conservatory.

The music-teacher was there before her. It was all as she said. He would have only the tuberoses. She looked at him as she knew how to look when she gave them to him; and he looked at her as men look at women they love; but nothing was said more than might have been uttered by perfect strangers.

They talked of the weather, of the last new book—of anything, of everything; she thinking to herself the while, "He dare not show his heart to Miss Van Velt." She might look and smile and speak softly without danger—an immeasurable gulf lay between them; on the other side he knelt worshipping her in vain.

He was a gentleman too. No one looking at them would have fancied that pretty girl in any way his superior. But that every man must fall in love with her, was, in his opinion, a law of nature. That only a rich and aristocratic person dared to aspire to her hand was another; but there was triumph in the adoration of those humble creatures at her feet.

When the music-master went away she ran upstairs quite exhilarated, and put on her hat for a walk. In this summer weather the Van Velts lived at their country seat, and the doctor had ordered Miss Van Velt to walk every day. She had taken too little exercise, as idle young ladies with carriages at command often do.

This afternoon her way lay along a green lane, dotted here and there by pretty cottages. Passing one of these Miss Van Velt saw a dress she knew and bonnet that was familiar to her emerge from its little gate. They were the dress and bonnet of Miss Burns, a lady given to the visiting of the sick. Kettles of soup and little Bibles were always ready for the poor. She preached to them, but, if they needed it, she fed them also. Every one spoke well of Miss Burns.

"My dear Miss Van Velt," she said, "how glad I am to meet you. I've been paying a most interesting visit—not to a poor person, not a very poor one, at least—a lady; but nearly gone in consumption, and so beautiful! Will you see her? I should like to introduce you. A call from you would cheer her up. She's in the garden. She's not your age, and so pretty. Let me just take you to see her?"

Miss Van Velt made no objection. Miss Burns took her by the arm and led her round the house into the garden.

There, under a grape arbour, in a great chair, reclined a lady—a very young one, not more than seventeen—and as beautiful as a human being well could be, but plainly fading fast.

There were homely flowers growing all about her, and in the bosom of her dress she wore pinned a white tuberose and a geranium leaf.

Near her sat an old woman, knitting. She knew Miss Van Velt, and courtesied.

The girl looked up.

"This is Miss Rose Bray—Miss Van Velt," said Miss Burns. "Miss Van Velt was a scholar of mine a year or two ago, Rose. I wanted her to know you." "I am glad to know your friend," said Miss Van Velt. "I see you love flowers. I will send you as many as you want, and fruit also. Our grapes would tempt an invalid. You'll come and get some, won't you, Auntie Black, or shall I send a servant? That will be better. Anything you'd like to have I'd be so pleased to send."

"Yes, very kind of you," said the girl, wearily. "Yes, I love flowers."

"Have you tuberoses?" asked Miss Van Velt of Auntie Black. "Those in Miss Bray's dress are as fine as ours, I'm sure."

"Nay," said the old lady, "some one brings those to Rosa. Don't they, dear?"

The girl flushed brightly.

"A lover, evidently," thought Miss Van Velt.

"Every afternoon he brings 'em," said the old lady. "She loves tuberoses so."

Miss Van Velt glanced at the flowers. She knew of none so fine save in her own conservatory. "Every afternoon!" Suddenly she felt angry without knowing why. What a very beautiful girl this was!

She said a few more words and hurried away. Out in the lane she put her thoughts into shape for herself, having bidden Miss Burns good bye.

"Those flowers are the same I gave this morning to Mr. Devoe, to the little music-master," she walked on faster, her face quite hot. "She is much prettier than I," she said. "He is in love with her, not with me. I am foolish. He comes to the conservatory only to get the flowers for her. He don't think of me. Of course I don't care—why should I?"

She sat down under a great elm tree, holding her parasol low. Her face was very flushed.

"He has dared to flirt with me—with Miss Van Velt!" she said. "He!" and now burning tears were in her eyes.

"I'm not sure," she said. "There may be other tuberoses in the place as large as those. I'll know whether there are."

She arose and walked on.

"After all," she said, "what does it matter? I could never have a thought for him. I've said so often enough. I know that I shall marry Charles Delano when he asks me. He's rich; he's stylish; he's of good family; he's very handsome. What is a little music-master to me? Only," and she clenched her gloved hand, "did he dare look so at me, if he meant nothing?"

The next day she listened to the music lesson in the conservatory, and she had a little piece of scarlet ribbon in her pocket.

When Mr. Devoe joined her, she smiled more charmingly than ever, and she tied his little bouquet with the ribbon. When he turned his eyes upon her—when he looked as she was used to see him look—when she saw in his face that tender viffulness that had proved to her haughty heart that he loved her well and hopelessly, she said to herself "this is natural. This is not art. He does love me. There

are other tuberoses in our neighbourhood and that he is not Rose's lover." Yet she called on Rose in the twilight with an offering of white grapes, and before the girl saw her she had seen that the flowers in her bosom were held together with scarlet ribbon.

It was the first experience of this kind that Miss Van Velt, belle, beauty and heiress, had ever had.

She stood triumphant, and others suffered for her sake. When she should marry, hearts would break. This was her faith. Suddenly, one man had dared to slight her. He looked tenderly at her, meaning nothing. He only played the admirer, and carried her gift of flowers to another. She always had believed that he wore their faded ashes next his heart, and apostrophized them in lonely moments! He only came to the conservatory to obtain something hard to find elsewhere. He cared nothing for her brunette beauty. He admired fair hair and blue eyes. He was Rose's lover.

Miss Van Velt came to this conclusion reluctantly. If this could be so, why others might do the same. Where was her power? Suddenly, as she found herself lowered in her own estimation, she found the man who had brought her to this pass exalted. She suddenly felt that his admiration was something well worth having.

Yesterday he had been a humble lover, at whose homage she jested; now he was a man not to be won by her charms.

He had only flirted with her. He was in love with this beautiful girl at the cottage.

The next day she sought Miss Burns, to talk about the girl. But Miss Burns only knew that Mrs. Black said she had had money left her, that there was some trouble she did not know, and that her cousin, Charles Devore, was always very kind to her.

"Buys her flowers and books, and sings to her, and all that sort of thing," said Miss Burns.

After this one might have noticed that Miss Van Velt was a thought less gay in her manner. A shadow lay upon the beauty of her face. She was conscious of being mastered by her own feelings—something that never happened to her before. Against her own will her feet carried her to the conservatory, where she plucked tuberoses for this music-master to give his love.

She could not forbear herself to see him, and this with lovers at her feet, and the power of an acknowledged belle and heiress in her hands.

The grapes that hang out of reach are sweetest. The lover of another woman, whose heart she could not move, was to Miss Van Velt a different being from those who pined for her smiles. He was still only the music-master—still poor, and no handsomer than before. All the same he was out of reach.

Talking to him more, listening to what he said in a graver, quieter way, she learnt more of him. He was mentally superior to most of the men she knew. He was charming if he was not beautiful; and still, had she not known that her flowers were given for his lady-love, she might have fancied that he meant something by his tender glances.

"They are not assumed," she said to herself, "only they are not for me. When he looks so he is thinking of that fair girl at Widow Black's cottage."

One day Charles Delano proposed to her and was refused.

Time passed on, the weather grew cold. There was to be a flitting toward soon, but Miss Van Velt had no delightful anticipation of the coming winter. All that she had rejoiced in seemed stale, flat and unprofitable. She was pleased no more with the thought of wounding many men's hearts. She desired to have one for her very own—just one out of all the beating hearts in all the world; yet for that she made no effort. She could strive with all a belle's high art for love that she intended to fling aside when it was won; but she was too proud to reckon on the man she loved in very truth.

Miss Van Velt grew fond of sitting alone in the twilight; of wandering in the mossy garden, beneath the glimpses of the moon; of reading poetry and singing tender love songs to herself.

It was the country custom of the place to toll the church bell when any one left it for ever through the gate of death. One day, walking in her garden, Miss Van Velt heard the long, solemn strokes drop upon the air.

Nineteen of them. Pale and trembling, she stood still. Just then a voice, broken with sobs, called to her over the gate. Mrs. Burns stood there.

"It is little Rose," she said. "She died last night in my arms."

"Was he there?" asked Miss Van Velt.

"Her cousin, yes. He knelt beside her. 'I was very wicked, Charles,' she said. 'But you forgave me. Kiss me before I go. I would have loved you, Charles, if I had known you as I do now.' And he kissed her. It almost broke my heart," said poor Miss Burns.

The two women sat down together. The young

one held the old one's hand. Tears flooded both their eyes.

Neither said a word more. For once between two women silence said all.

But when Miss Burns was gone, Miss Van Velt went into her conservatory, and severed from its stem every waxen tuberoses that grew there. She heaped them in a basket with long, trailing slips of cypress, and took her way to Mrs. Black's, carrying them with her own hands, unused even to such dainty burdens as they were.

In the darkened parlour she found the music-master, Charles Devore.

"Take these flowers," she said. "You have given her many of them ere now. These are the very last."

"Sweets to the sweet," he said, sadly. "Thank you, Miss Van Velt."

She had looked upon the fair, dead face, and had gone homeward. The day had passed, and others had slipped away.

The lessons had been discontinued for some time, when one afternoon she heard the notes of the piano, and that well-known touch again. By force of habit her feet carried her to the conservatory. He would not seek her there, she felt sure; but if it should be that he did, he should find her.

It was his step at last. He stood close to her. She looked into his face.

"I have come to say good-by," he said; "I am going away."

Not a word did she say. Soon he spoke again.

"Mrs. Black has told me how kind you were to my poor little cousin. Hers was a sad story."

"You may have heard something of it. In our childhood our parents foolishly set us apart for each other. When she was sixteen we were to have been married—neither of us loving each other. Though I did not know then but that the brotherly tenderness I felt for her was all-sufficient. She knew better than I. She eloped one morning."

"When she returned to her father's, insulted, neglected, even beaten by the fellow, the old man turned her from his door penniless. Of course I did not leave her to starve. But when she left this world she was rich. Her father died suddenly. Probably he would have made his will had he lived longer, but as it is all went to her, poor girl."

He paused. Miss Van Velt's head was turned away. She was looking pensively at the ground.

"Love comes to every man at last," he said. "I did not love that beautiful little cousin of mine, whom once the fates seemed to destine me to marry. I thought perhaps I should never love any one—that I was not made of the stuff that nature makes lovers of. I know better now. Perhaps I know it to my cost. Before I leave this place I must make certain."

He drew nearer to Miss Van Velt. She still looked away from him.

"I think you know the language of flowers?" he said. "Will you give me a red rose?"

Miss Van Velt looked at him now. He looked at her. A red rose drooped so low beside her that its petals almost touched her hair. She lifted her white hand and broke it from its stem and gave it to him.

An hour afterward he said this to her:

"After my cousin I am heir to all my late uncle's property. I am a rich man, else I should not have asked Miss Van Velt to give me a red rose."

Miss Van Velt hardly felt glad to hear it. Rich or poor it was the same to her. She had given the red rose long ago, when she only seemed to give him tuberoses.

M. K. D.

THORNEYCROFT GRANGE.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW days slipped by, "velvet shod," at Thorneycroft Grange. Maud was strangely, deliriously happy. The feeling of loving and being loved was still something very new and strange to her guileless heart. There seemed a deep, ecstatic joy in the bare idea. She was unceasingly glad and thankful for this unspeakable bliss. Even though her young life should now be suddenly overclouded forever, she felt that she could not be thankful enough for the cup of rare delight that had once been held to her lips for her to quaff her fill, and that she could better and more bravely meet and bear every ill of the future on account of it. She had loved, and been beloved! Wondrous and intoxicating thought!

Ernest Devonshire came nearly every day to Thorneycroft Grange, and Maud honestly thought she discovered some new beauty and nobility of mind or character at every visit. She could hardly realize that this grand, princely man could stoop from the high pedestal to which her admiration had raised him to mate with such as she. Her great passion

made her strangely humble. She felt that she was weak, foolish girl, while he was the greatest and most noble of men.

The subject of the engagement was discussed more than once in the family couloir, for, though reserved and reticent towards outsiders, there were charming frankness and candour among the members of this happy household. Magdalen was rarely present at such discussions, and then only when she had interrupted one of them by coming in unexpectedly, for they were never commenced in her presence, which at such times always threw a restraint over the conversation. Nevertheless, she knew enough of the progress of affairs to feel convinced that the engagement was fully consummated, and that it was entirely agreeable to all parties concerned.

When Mr. Devonshire called of an evening Magdalen managed to see as much of his society as was possible. She exerted herself as she had never done before, brought to bear all the dazzling array of her bewildering charms, even tried the effect of covert sneers against Maud and Leonard Harding, but of no avail. Ernest was utterly unmoved. He could laugh at her insinuations, treating them as some idle jest, and turn from her intoxicating beauty to contemplate the blushing loveliness of Maud Ingestre with a sigh of relief and rapture. His whole soul seemed bound up in this pure, sweet girl, and at such times the infuriated woman could have torn out her own heart, in her unavailing rage and despair.

Mrs. Ingestre and Maud knew nothing of this, for if they had suspected anything at first, their fears were now entirely allayed, and they believed that Magdalen took only a sisterly interest in Ernest's welfare. But not so with Miss Barbara Dean. She had passed through quite an experience in her eventful life, had had her eyes thoroughly opened, and could see things more nearly in their true light, and so fully realized the game that Magdalen was playing.

"Miss Magdalen, let me warn you that you are not wise," she said one evening, when Miss Digby had manifested more evidently than usual her desire to monopolize the attentions of Mr. Devonshire. "Indeed, you display anything but wisdom," her tone provokingly cool. "You ought not to waste your strength in a futile struggle after the golden apples of the Hesperides, when you cannot help but see how securely they are kept beyond your reach."

They were standing near the open window, while Mrs. Ingestre, Ernest and Maud were grouped about the piano at the other end of the apartment.

Magdalen suddenly turned her back upon them, leaning forward as if to look from the window, but her face glowed with the white heat of smothered passion.

"Thank you, Miss Dean, for the very friendly interest which you seem to take in my welfare," she returned, rather fiercely. "I shall be likely to get better in future, since I have an Hecuba to rail at me, and set me right!"

She had unconsciously raised her voice in the fierce heat that consumed her.

Aunt Barbara only smiled at the covert thrust. She was about to reply, when Mrs. Ingestre called out pleasantly, from her station by the piano:

"My dear Magdalen, what have you and Barbara found to quarrel about now?"

"Not much, Mrs. Ingestre; only a question in mythology," Magdalen returned, sweetly. "I think I have finally settled it to Miss Dean's satisfaction."

Aunt Barbara smiled again, while Mr. Devonshire, who stood nearest to them of the three grouped about the piano, looked suddenly at Magdalen with a curious light in his eyes. She saw it, and wondered with considerable secret uneasiness if he could possibly have overheard what they had been saying.

Thus the days sped on, and Tuesday finally came round.

Susette had discovered by some means that Mr. Harding was expected to return by the twelve o'clock train, and she reported as much to Magdalen.

The latter felt she must see him immediately, and make him acquainted with the progress of affairs since his departure. Her extreme restlessness would not admit of delay, or the assignment of some secure place for meeting. Therefore, though not without many doubts as to the prudence of the step, she resolved to visit him at his office. It was near two o'clock in the afternoon, the usual dinner hour at Thorneycroft Grange, but Magdalen excused herself under the plea of indisposition, and waited quietly in her room until after the bell had sounded, and she heard Mrs. Ingestre and Maud descend to the drawing-room.

Then she hastily wrapped a cloak about her, muffling a thick veil over her face, and stole carefully downstairs, and out at a side door, speeding along a by-path that led through the fields from Thorneycroft Grange to the village, thinking also would be less likely to be met and recognized there than in the more frequented highway.

She found Mr. Harding in, and alone, when she reached his house, which was situated just at the edge of the village.

We have said little about this man or his business heretofore, but now we will be more explicit. He was a singular character and one whom very few people fully understood, perhaps no one among his acquaintances. They only knew that he was handsome, polished, and witty, and exceedingly agreeable whenever he chose to make himself so. But this was not often, and he could be the most imperious and domineering of men on occasion. Therefore he was rather feared and dreaded than loved among the people of the town where he had been located nearly a year.

He was a surgeon by profession, but moved in the first circles, being known to have come of a good family. He appeared to be a man of means, and made his profession merely nominal, though always ready to attend to whatever came under his care. He was one of those clever fellows who can turn their hands to anything, and was often called in, in the place of one of the practising physicians, in cases of sudden illness which did not promise to become too serious. In this way he had won for himself quite a reputation.

Most men have their hobbies; Leonard Harding had his—chemistry. Of this science he was an indefatigable student, though what, if any, good came from his constant trials of experiments with his chemicals no one but himself really knew. His room looked more like a laboratory than anything else, and even contained a small furnace and an alembic, besides much valuable and costly apparatus. He was certainly more than an amateur in the science of which he appeared to be so fond, though whether he had ever turned it to practical utility was best known to himself.

He was seated at the table, looking over a pile of letters that had accumulated in his absence, when Magdalen Digby knocked at the door. It was opened by a boy kept to run errands.

"Please to walk in, ma'am," he said.

The boy placed a chair for her, with a bow.

Mr. Harding rose from his seat and cast a single scrutinizing glance at his visitor, then said to the boy:

"There, you may go now, James. My chambers will certainly need dusting and airing, after having been left so long. See that you do it well."

The boy bowed and disappeared.

Dr. Harding suddenly crossed over to his visitor's side, hastily taking her hand.

"To what am I indebted for this visit, Miss Digby?" he asked.

"Then you know me?" and she flung back her veil with an attempt at a smile. "I had hoped my disguise would have proved more effectual."

"The attempt was quite thrown away, if it was made for my benefit. I am not easily deceived."

"Nor did I wish to deceive you. I only assumed it because I did not know whom I might encounter here. I felt I must come to you at once. I know you were expected home by the twelve o'clock train."

"What have you got to say?" he asked.

"Have you the leisure to listen?"

"Yes. I have nothing but these letters to busy myself with just now. I hope you will speak freely."

His tone was calm, slightly cool. He seemed very different from what he had been that night at Thorneycroft Grange.

"Could it be that he was conquering his useless love for Maud?" Magdalen asked herself, with a sudden fear. She resolved to sift the matter.

"I am not sure that you will care to listen," she said, slowly. "I came to tell you of Maud Ingestre."

"What of her?" he asked, rather hoarsely.

"Have you not heard?"

"I have heard nothing since the night of the party." He spoke eagerly now. "You will remember that I was called away before it was over; I left for London early the next morning. I have seen nobody but James and my housekeeper since returning home. Speak out! What has happened? What have you come to tell me?"

His keen eyes seem to burn like coals.

She drew slightly away from him.

"I told you that night at Thorneycroft Grange that I might help you to win Maud Ingestre for your wife," she returned, with relentless calmness. "But matters had progressed farther than I was then aware. She is now betrothed to Ernest Devonshire!"

He started forward with an oath, a sudden passion flaming into his face. For a moment he stood there grinding his teeth impotently, but only for a moment. Then he sank into the nearest chair, calm and unmoved once more so far as outward expression went.

"I suppose you have told me the truth, Magdalen, but this news is no sweeter to me than to yourself. I have a consolation there." And he laughed sarcastically. "I don't know that I need to be surprised

in the least, moreover, as it is just what I have been expecting."

Magdalen eyed him silently, as he sat there with one hand supporting his handsome head. Somehow the sight of his calmness maddened her. She had expected to see him rage and tear, and vent curses on the man who had supplanted him.

"Are you going to suffer things to go on in this way?" she asked, rather fiercely. "Will you sit quietly by and see the hope of your life frustrated?"

He looked quietly into her heated face and smiled.

"I am only following your advice of the other night, my dear Miss Digby. I remember it if you, my Mentor, do not. What was it you said about calm, collected men, and getting into a passion? You see I am calm, collected, a perfect master of my own emotions. But let me whisper one word in your ear. Sooner than see Maud the bride of Ernest Devonshire I would wade through the hearts' blood of them both."

He smiled again, but a light had crept into his eyes from which she shrank back appalled.

For the first time she realized how terribly in earnest he was, how much he would sacrifice or dare to accomplish his fell purpose. From that moment she had no farther fears for him.

"Something must be done, but I know not what," she said, after a pause. "If matter run on in this way much longer I shall surely go mad. But I have been racking my brain in vain for any method that is likely to bring about a change. As a last resort, I have come to you."

He was silent for some moments, buried in deep thought. Finally he looked up at her.

"You are very beautiful, Magdalen Digby," he said, slowly. "I do not say it to flatter you, but merely mention it as a fact. You ought to be able to turn that beauty to account. It is strange you have never succeeded in making an impression upon Ernest Devonshire. I am sure he is impressionable enough."

She faced him suddenly, her black eyes glowing with a dangerous fire.

"You are treading on forbidden ground, Mr. Harding," she said, excitedly. "I have done with you as I have never done with mortal before, put off my mask in your presence, and suffered you to read me as I really am. It is because we need each other, and disguise is worse than folly between us. But there is one subject with which you must never meddle—Mr. Devonshire's relation with myself!"

"Suffer me to ask you a few questions, and then I will hold my peace. It is better that I should know more of you than I do, if I am to help you, as well as myself. Shall I go on?"

"Ask what you please, and I will use my own discretion about answering."

"How long have you known Ernest Devonshire?"

"For nearly three years. I made his acquaintance in London. In fact, I suppose I might as well confess the whole truth; a rankling bitterness in her tone. "I was wandering, destitute, and nearly starved—it does not matter what brought me to that condition. He picked me out of the mire, cared for me with the tenderness of a brother, and found me work, so that I was able to support myself, in part. A little more than a year since, he brought me here to Thorneycroft Grange, and placed me with Mrs. Ingestre, whose acquaintance he had formed the summer previous. My health seemed failing at the time, and I needed country air and quiet. It ended as you know. He paid my board at first, but finally Mrs. Ingestre took me in as a member of her own family, and refused to receive farther remuneration. Ernest had enlisted her sympathies for my deserted and orphan condition, and his recommendation was entirely sufficient. Now you know the whole story."

"And I hope eventually to take advantage of that knowledge," he said, thoughtfully. "I am glad you have confided so much of your history to me, though I had suspected something of the kind before. It seems very strange though. In a single year you have worked your way into the most select circles here, and have become quite a reigning favourite, despite your obscure origin."

"Mrs. Ingestre's patronage was the open sesame. Very many take me for the adopted daughter of the house, and of course I am careful that these shall continue to think so. No one outside the family knows my true history, and most people conclude I am a distant relative of Mr. Devonshire, since he has brought me here."

The surgeon smiled.

"It is better that they should," he said. "It may help us in our plans. Now I must have time for reflection. In a day or two I will see you again, and acquaint you with the result of my cogitations. We must venture on some bold stroke, if we hope to succeed. Just now I do not see that we can do anything."

Magdalen arose, and drew her cloak about her with an impatient jerk. She could not endure this delay

with her blood at such a fever heat. She was about to rejoin something rather sharply, when the passage door suddenly opened, and James made his appearance, bearing a letter in his hand. She had just time to drop her veil before he was sufficiently advanced to catch sight of her face.

Mr. Harding frowned slightly, but extended his hand for the letter.

The surgeon turned the envelope about, so that his eyes fell upon the superscription, Magdalen watching him closely.

Suddenly he started to his feet with a gasping cry. A gray pallor settled slowly over his face, leaving it like the face of the dead. Even his lips grew white. Magdalen went towards him with an exclamation of alarm.

"What is the matter? Are you ill, Mr. Harding?" she asked.

He quickly rallied, under her keen scrutiny. In a moment or two he was more composed.

"It is nothing, do not mind me," he said, with the ghost of a smile. "I am used to it—this terrible pain in my side. It is soon over."

He put up his hand. Magdalen said nothing, but she was not so easily deceived. She knew that it was not physical pain that had distressed him so—it was the sight of that letter! Standing near him, she tried to get a glimpse at it, but he crushed it rather rudely in his hand. She had only time to see that it was directed in a lady's hand-writing.

"You will have to excuse me this morning, Miss Digby," speaking with apparent effort. "I will see you again very soon. Then I hope we shall be able to arrange matters more to our satisfaction."

He bowed her out, courteously bidding her good-morning, and then carefully closed and locked the door behind her.

CHAPTER III.

LINDEN was a small and very quiet village, having few visitors with the exception of those who came to spend a brief season with one of the many wealthy families in the neighbourhood. As a natural consequence, the two inns of which it boasted, never being overburdened with guests, were not the best of their kind, but simply good, comfortable, wholesome houses, where one was sure of a hearty welcome, a clean bed, and the best that the landlord afforded.

The "King's Arms" was by far the more pretensions of the two. This was a large, square building, weather-beaten and stained by time, the shutters occasionally slamming. A great, lumbering sign-board, on which was daubed a rude caricature of one of the Georges, creaked dismally from the bough of an elm that grew in front, and furnished to the passer-by an evidence that entertainment was to be had there for both man and beast.

Externally, the building was certainly lonesome and dreary looking enough, but once inside the walls, and, presto! you found pleasant halls, clean, spacious rooms, a neatly laid table, and, best of all, a cordial, motherly soul in Dame Alden, the good Boniface's wife, who would be sure to make you feel easy and at home before you had been five minutes under her hospitable roof. Indeed, it was she, mainly, who kept up the fallen fortunes of the house, as her husband was an easy, thriftless soul, who would have let everything go to wreck and ruin but for her ceaseless effort to keep both their heads "above water."

But, to resume the thread of our story, we must go back to the afternoon of the Saturday preceding that Tuesday on which Magdalen had paid her visit to Mr. Harding. It had been a busy day with Dame Alden—indeed, Saturdays were always busy. The chambers had to be dusted and swept, whether any one lodged in them or not, and the halls must be cleaned, for that "shiftless Reuben" was never the neatest or most careful of men, and sadly tried the poor dame's patience, now and then, with the amount of dirt and litter which he left behind him.

"It seems that we must all have our crosses to bear in this wilderness o' woe," she was wont to say to Mrs. Jones, a friend who lived just over the way. "I suppose that shiftless Reuben was meant to be my cross! There's no getting along with him. He only cumbars the airth, if I, his wile, who ought to love and honour him, do say it! He just trots about, makin' me work, and doin' nothing himself. He's kind and good-natured enough, so far as that goes, but, oh, so shiftless! You've no idea what I have to endure—no idea, Mrs. Jones."

And her trials had been fully as great as usual on this particular Saturday of which we write. But they were nearly over, for the house was swept and garnished from top to bottom, and Reuben had come shuffling in from the stables, and taken his usual seat in one corner of the front porch, to enjoy a quiet smoke there, with no farther fear of being routed by duster or broom, when the five o'clock Harrieville coach came dashing up before the door, and left its single passenger, a lady, upon the steps of the hotel.



[THE GUEST AT THE "KING'S ARMS."]

Nearly all the strangers who found their way to this quiet village were gentlemen, and it was an exceedingly rare occurrence for a lady to be soliciting the hospitality of the "King's Arms."

Dame Alden was just arranging some fresh flowers in the front room, but she dropped everything where she was, with an exclamation of surprise at the sight of her unexpected guest, and hastened out to meet her.

"Good mornin', madam! Will you walk in?" she asked, with a courtesy as she appeared in the low doorway.

The figure on the steps turned suddenly and took a step or two forward, throwing back her veil as she did so, thus revealing a pale and rather sad but very sweet face. The eyes were clear and expressive, the mouth tender and mobile, the features regular. She must once have been very beautiful, but now, though apparently not over twenty-five years of age, looked strangely wan, faded, and old, as if she had seen much trouble. She was clad in mourning, and Dame Alden, from this fact and her sorrowful face, at once took her to be a widow; therefore her motherly heart softened towards her immediately.

"Thank you," the lady said, in a sweet voice, looking up, with a wan smile, in answer to the good dame's invitation to come in. "I wish to find some good, quiet hotel, where I can remain undisturbed for a few days, perhaps longer."

"Come in, madam, come in," repeated Dame Alden, with much cordiality. "You won't find a better place than this in all Linden, if I do say it! And as for bein' quiet, there ain't so much as a mouse stirrin' about the old shell, except me and my Reuben and Susan, my maid, and the stable-boy. Why, you won't know there's a living soul about the place but yourself!"

The lady smiled.

"I think your house will suit," she said, quietly. "Will you please show me a room—a front room on the second floor, if you have it to spare?"

"Lawks, madam, you can take your choice out of all the rooms in the house, if I has to give up my own to accommodate you."

"I shall be satisfied with any comfortable room, provided that it overlooks the street. This small trunk is all the luggage that I have. You will please have it brought up, as soon as I have settled on my quarters."

Dame Alden led the way up one flight of stairs, throwing open the door of her best guest-chamber, with a look of pardonable pride and complacency upon her face.

"Do you think you could be satisfied with this,

madam?" she asked, with a look that said plainly, "you don't know what's what if you are not!"

It was a spacious chamber, separated from the hall by a narrow ante-room. It looked really elegant, from the scrupulous neatness that pervaded everything. The floor was covered with cool matting, the windows draped with muslin, and the bed, which stood in one corner, at the right of the door, seemed like a great bank of snow, so white and clean did it appear.

"Perfectly!" exclaimed the lady, a glow of pleasure breaking over her face. "It is the pleasantest and most home-like place I have seen for a long time. And," stepping forward, "the view from the window is just what I desire, also."

"I am glad you like it—very glad, Mrs. —"

The landlady paused, with a significant look. A slight flush crept into her guest's face, but was gone in an instant.

"My name is Grant—Mrs. Grant," she said, quietly. "There now! Why, there are Grants livin' on the hill yonder, just beyond Thornycroft Grange—Charles Grant, and his brother Gideon. Are they any relation of yours, if I may make bold to ask?"

"Not the slightest. I have no relatives by my name in the country, that I am aware of."

"Then you are an utter stranger here? I didn't know but what you had come expectin' to meet some old friends."

"This is my first visit to your village," was the brief reply.

"Lawks! Then you don't know anybody? Well, they are folks as is easy to git acquainted with, for the most part, supposin' you should stay here long. Now there's Mrs. Jones, jest over the way. She has got to runnin' in here jest as if it were her own house. You'll know her before you've been here two days."

Mrs. Grant laid aside her bonnet and shawl, and seated herself by the window, looking out rather wearily. Her face seemed paler and sadder than ever, in the full light that fell upon it.

"What house is that yonder—that large gray house upon the hill?" she asked, turning suddenly.

"That 'ere is Thornycroft Grange, one of the handsomest places in the whole town. There has been a mint of money spent on it to make it look pretty and nice. But then Mrs. Ingestre is as rich as a queen, and she can afford it. Why, she gives away, every month of her life, more than all Reuben and I are worth. I do believe! But, lawful sakes! you look tired a'most to death, and must want your tea, and I'm standing here gossipin'! I'll have it sent up directly, Mrs. Grant, or it may be, if Susan is busy, I'll bring it myself."

"Do, I shall be glad to have you," returned Mrs. Grant, who seemed to encourage her hostess's predilection for gossiping. "I expect to be lonely at first and you will be company for me."

Dame Alden hurried below, with a gratified smile breaking over her motherly face.

"The most civil-spoken lady I've met with this many a day," she said to Susan, while toasting some bread for tea. "Not a bit proud or stuck-up, though I know she's a regular born lady, jest like Mrs. Ingestre and Miss Maud. But then, she is so poor and peaked, and so sad lookin'! We must do all we can, Susan, to cheer her up."

When she carried up the tea and bread Mrs. Grant was still sitting by the window, just as she had left her, so she wheeled a table up beside her and placed the tray upon it.

"There, my dear lady, it will be a heap pleasanter sitting here to sip your tea. You can watch the sunlight, if you choose, as it dies from them hills up yonder, and stays to take a last peep at Thornycroft Grange. It's a nice place, this is, and I'm sure you'll learn to like it."

"I presume I may. It does seem very pleasant, and there must be some delightful scenery in the neighbourhood."

Dame Alden gossiped on, garrulously enough, and Mrs. Grant seemed inclined to extract from her all the information she could relative to the village and its inhabitants.

Finally she pushed her chair back, having finished her tea, and again gave her undivided attention to the prospect without.

"Who is building that new house at the right of Thornycroft Grange, on the eminence in the distance?" she finally asked. "It looks now as if it might be intended for a very elegant residence indeed."

"Oh, yes, madam! It will be ahead of the Grange itself, folks say, though I haven't found time to go up and see it, as yet. It's a stranger that's buildin' that—a friend of the Ingestres. He has not been here long. Perhaps you may have heard of him, Ernest Devonshire?"

Mrs. Grant had sat there listening quietly enough, but at the mention of that name she started suddenly to her feet with the shrill cry:

"Just Heaven! is it possible?"

Her wan face grew whiter and wanner, until it looked like a corpse, her lids drooped, the light died slowly from her eyes, and, with a low moan, she tottered, and fell forward into Dame Alden's arms, insensible.

(to be continued.)



[THE DREAD PRESENCE.]

A JOURNEY BY RAIL.

CHAPTER I.

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young
blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

ONE morning, in the summer of 1869, I was going down to the west of England for a few weeks, and had taken my seat in a first-class carriage at Paddington, in which there were no other passengers; and there appeared every probability that I should be left in undisturbed possession of it, when, just as we were on the point of starting, the door opened and a tall, gentlemanly man stepped in. He had a carpet-bag in his hand. A quick, scrutinizing glance seemed to take in my personal appearance. This done, he sat down in the extreme opposite corner to me, as if overwhelmed by mental suffering or fatigue.

Involuntarily we often find ourselves speculating about perfect strangers with whom we are brought into contact. This was my case now.

Who was he? What was he? Was he thirty, forty, or fifty years of age? Probably the first, but how seamed with care they must have been to leave such deep traces behind them!

His clustering hair was very gray, as also the beard, which he wore of a considerable length. The moustache, eyebrows and eyelashes were jet black, showing green years still in the man, whose frame, however, was shattered and attenuated by illness or mental suffering.

Now and then he would start, as from a reverie, and gaze wistfully from the window, then draw back again into his corner.

Thus we journeyed onwards for miles, until I found myself actually longing to hear the sound of the voice of my companion, or to see some movement in the still, attenuated body—it seemed so lifeless when quiescent.

At length, as if to gratify my wish, the stranger unlocked his travelling-bag and, with a nervous hand, took out a roll of papers, and then, for the first time since his scrutinizing glance on entering the carriage, he turned and looked full at me, an earnest, searching gaze. Evidently he had not forgotten my presence, and only lost sight of it till he felt disposed to study me, as he seemed now to be doing quite at his ease.

"Who are you? May I trust you?" his look

seemed to say. "Treat you as a friend, or look upon you as an enemy?"

As if to prove to me how completely I had read his meaning, a pale, sickly smile flitted over his face as he said:

"It is an unusual thing, sir, perhaps, for an utter stranger to admit, but I have been closely scanning your face to read whether I may trust you with the secret of a life."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, beyond measure surprised.

"And at what conclusion have you arrived?"

"That I may," was the reply.

"Thank you. May I ask how I can serve you?"

Involuntarily I assumed the tone of one addressing another whose health, whether of body or mind, requires indulgence.

"Have you," he asked, "the patience to read a strange, wild—I must add, improbable tale?"

"I have patience for anything I choose to undertake."

"Which means," he quickly added, "that if you promise you will perform? But I need not ask that. I read it in your face."

Again I thanked my strange companion for the compliment he paid me.

There was a silence of some minutes as he unfolded the sheets of a closely written manuscript, and then I noticed that the left hand wore a tightly fitting glove, not merely drawn on, but sewn so that it could not be readily removed; only by cutting it off, in fact.

"It must seem strange to you," he said, after a thoughtful pause, "that I should ask an utter stranger to do me a signal service. Yet I do not hesitate," he continued, before I could reply, "for I hold it as an article of faith that we should help one another."

"What do you say to the many who do all they can to injure one another?" I asked.

He sighed deeply, and answered:

"Happy are those who die young, before they meet with deceptions like those!"

I thought the reply rather vague, and I suppose looked surprised, for he hastened to say:

"I was addressing my thoughts. There are those who cannot die. I pity them."

"What can you mean?"

"That the earth could not enclose them. They would come among us again. You look surprised; but I want you to read this history—my own. I dare not trust it to any member of my own family. They all have an interest in crushing facts. So I have sought a stranger to do so. I have been long seeking one. Your countenance inspired me with confidence. Will you read it attentively and not question the strangeness of my proceedings till we meet

again? And then I will ask you to advise with me, if you will do so."

"I will endeavour to meet your wishes," I said, really bewildered by the whole proceeding, and scarcely knowing what to answer. "But where shall I see you, and when?"

"On the tenth of next month—mark well the date—I will meet you at Doctor Verroll's."

"Good Heavens! How do you know that he and I are acquainted? We are not strangers then?"

My surprise was at its height, for Dr. Verroll had been my medical attendant for some time; though beyond that the doctor and I were strangers to each other—I mean with his family I was unacquainted.

"I have been so earnestly seeking the solution of the mystery in these papers that I have been almost everywhere, and scarcely a countenance above the common is unknown to me. I have another request to make when you have read it. Be secret and watchful; I feel as if you are destined to help me in my greatest need—will you promise to do so if I call upon you?"

I hesitated a moment. What if this man should prove to be some felon? But then the name of Dr. Verroll convinced me that such could not be the case, so I said:

"If on reading this manuscript I can aid you I will."

"Thank you; I know you can. We part at the next station. I am on a track—There take them," (he pressed the papers into my hand,) "Do not forget the tenth of next month above all, and strict secrecy to every one."

The train stopped at Slough.

"Conceal the papers and farewell!" he said, in a whisper.

The door opened, he stepped out and was gone in a moment, but we met before the tenth of the following month. Once more we started, and I opened the manuscript.

"Hurrah! hurrah! Here's Avon Sedley!" the manuscript commenced.

"Bravo, Avon Sedley!"

"Three cheers for him, boys!"

"Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

The very rafters of the room shook with the prolonged welcome, accompanied by the stamping of many feet.

"Pon my soul, Avon, you deserve this ovation, for you are a good fellow to come to-night."

"The last evening of his bachelorhood!"

"And with so fair a bride in perspective!"

"So much to do at the last moment."

"Here's good luck you, Avon!"
 "Three cheers for him! Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah!"

"Thank you, boys, thank you!" exclaimed Avon, a young, joyous-looking medical student, "thank you all! By George! I could not miss coming to-night to see you assembled here once more, and take a farewell dip into my bachelor life again."

"Then you are really going to be married to-morrow?"

"Positively."

"And become a steady married man."

"Ay, and an energetic medical practitioner."

"But you will not need a profession."

"Everybody needs occupation. I would not be dependent upon my wife."

"Egad, she must love you, to give up such a home. A poor doctor!"

"Love for love, boys; not many love as I do, I believe—it absorbs my very being. Leonora is literally a portion of myself, of my existence. I feel that without her I should die."

"So many have before said," cried one of the others, with a comical laugh.

"Well, I feel what I say, Jack. If I lost her it would kill me, or I should go mad!"

"Bah! men don't die of love."

"Neither become lunatics, though I admit they are often driven mad after marriage."

"It's all very well for you fellows to jeer at me," said Avon, in a grave tone, "but you cannot imagine how every sense seems bound up in Leonora Verrill. I am sure were anything to separate us I should go raving mad or commit suicide!"

"That in itself is madness," some one said; and then there was silence for a few minutes, for even this set of wild fellows felt that Avon Sedley really meant what he said.

The first to speak was the one called Jack.

"Well, then, Avon," he said, "as you are here, and very good it was of you to come, we must make much of you."

The others burst out into another hilarious shout of welcome.

"That's not the way!" exclaimed Jack. "Show respect to your friends by the select company to which you introduce them."

So saying he rose and opened a cupboard.

The large room in which this convivial meeting was held was one attached to the residence of a celebrated surgeon, who used it as a lecture-room—he so called it, but the world whispered that more than one grave had sent its dead secretly to lie gaunt and grim on that table at which those reckless, thoughtless young men sat, with pipes, tobacco and spirits before them, a weekly sort of club held there among themselves, and at which one of their number, now no longer a student, assisted for the last time.

The cupboard door was opened, and, lo! the old saying of a skeleton in every cupboard was exemplified in this.

A small, shrunken anatomy of a man sprang out, a light was fastened within the skull, which lit up the hollow ghastliness, a wine-glass was fixed in the right hand—the effect was electrifying even upon those wild spirits, all shrank back with an exclamation of disgust.

"When the deuce did you do that, Jack?" asked one.

"You and the doctor did it between you, I suppose," said another.

"Ha! not badly done, lads, I think?" exclaimed Jack, in a tone of self-esteem. "Old Sawbones and I did it together, that is, we arranged the spring, and I placed the light in the vacant seat of sense, and the glass, too, in the hand, for this festive occasion."

"Confound your sorry fun, Jack!" exclaimed Avon Sedley, who up to that moment had sat still, gasping, with straining eyeballs, and pale as ashes, at the unwelcome guest. "Confound your sorry fun, you always do something queer."

"Pon my soul, that's too bad," chimed in several of them. "You know Avon is superstitious, and on such a night, too."

"A medical student superstitious!" roared some others.

"I am," responded Avon. "Who can control his impressions? I'd give fifty pounds if Jack had not done it! The deuce take such guests!" he suddenly exclaimed, springing up and raising his hand to strike down the mocking glass.

"Touch not!" screamed Jack, attempting to stop his hand.

But it was too late, the glass lay shivered in atoms on the ground, and the skeleton from the shock rattled in its wires, as if it too would have fallen to pieces.

"Now you are done for, old boy!" said Jack, shaking his finger at Avon with mock solemnity, "do you know whose skeleton that is?"

"Whose?" asked a dozen voices.

"The most noted necromancer, wizard, or whatever you choose to call him, in Bohemia. No one ever knew where he dwelt, but somewhere in the Black Forest. There, in the most tangled depths, his votaries, who wished to consult him, were sure to meet with him."

"Supposing though," said some one, sceptically, "that several persons wished to see him at the same time?"

"There's the mystery. He never failed to appear, certain laws being adhered to."

"Prayers backwards, and those sort of things, I suppose?"

"A drop of blood from a maiden's heart was the only lure," answered Jack.

A derisive shout followed from all but Avon, who was strangely affected by the scene.

"Laugh away, laugh away, boys," answered Jack, nodding his head, "but I hope none of you will ever be under the influence of Schwartz Brandt."

"But he's dead!" cried one.

"A bag of bones!" laughed another.

"An old rattle!" exclaimed a third.

"The strange thing is," said Jack, mysteriously, "that they say his spirit exists in every separate bone, and woe to the person who offers him, even now, an insult."

"And Avon Sedley hit him!" said one, laughing.

"And beware, beware!" chanted Jack.

"Beware!" was distinctly uttered in a loud, menacing tone.

Even the most light of heart of those young fellows sprang up and gazed on one another.

"Who said that?" asked Avon, with pale lips.

"I!" was the answer, in a hollow tone.

Yet no one seemed to speak.

"Put back that grim guest," said one of the more serious. "Jack, this is no joke."

"By Heaven, I know nothing of what we have all heard," said the one addressed. "I only know this, that the doctor and I got the bones over from Germany in a sort of curious make, and he and I put them together, and we have been weeks about the job, and a host of trouble those old bones have given us."

"But it's all humbug about the wizard, eh?"

"No, on my life, I tell you as I heard it. Such were the credentials sent with the bones."

As he spoke, he pushed back the skeleton into the cupboard, and closed the door.

"And now," he said, "I'll tell you all I know about him."

"Schwartz Brandt lived, as I have told you, in the Black Forest in Bohemia. For years he was the terror, though sought after when his services were required, of the country around, and the price of his obedience to any call was a drop of maiden's blood drawn near the heart. You are aware," continued the narrator, "that in the Bohemian markets large quantities of every sort of game, animal and feathered, are brought so completely frozen, that they are placed in rows on their legs for sale."

"This then admitted, we will proceed."

"One day, an English gentleman who was travelling through Bohemia went for amusement out with a large party of sportsmen into the forest."

At this part of the tale Avon turned deadly pale, though no one noticed it, all were so intent on the speaker.

"Into the forest," continued Jack, "and there they shot large quantities of game. This Englishman, however, missed a fine buck—that is, he aimed at it within a few paces. It seemed to his bewildered sight that the shot went through and through the body, yet it did not fall, but turned round and looked full at the sportsman, when he perceived that it had its antlers broken in a most peculiar manner."

"As if by magic, it faded from his sight; he went up to the place where it had stood, and there on the snow was a large spot of blood, exactly the shape of a human heart. Much impressed by this strange circumstance, the gentleman quitted the hunt."

"The following day he was strolling through the market, and there, frozen, yet standing as in life, was the deer he had shot; it was unmistakable from its strange antlers, and a shot wound had pierced the heart. Strange, too, the eyes were wide open, and seemed endowed with vision as they looked reproachfully, it seemed, on its slayer."

"Well, the sportsman, out of a desire to possess what he had evidently brought down, though another had found it, purchased it, took it home and placed it in a heated room to unfreeze it, and there left it a couple of days."

"During that period the most unaccountable noises were heard in the house, the tones of piteous wailing resounded from garret to cellar. On the third day, the deer being perfectly thawed, the gentleman stood by to superintend and assist in removing the skin carefully, intending to have it stuffed. But at

the first incision of the knife a noise like thunder resounded through the house, as if the roof was being rent off forcibly, the earth trembled as if shaken by an earthquake, and the deer dropped from their hands, a heap of blanched human bones! You have seen them."

"That skeleton was the broken-antlered deer, and from that hour no one ever saw Schwartz Brandt again."

Avon groaned aloud.

"The Englishman who shot the deer," he said, "was my father."

None are quite free from superstitious fear in some shape or another. The combination of Avon's projected marriage, this strange history, in which his father had played so prominent a part, the mysterious word of warning, all impressed upon those reckless youths with a feeling akin to dread of evil.

The silence which had fallen upon all was broken by a deep groan, which seemed to issue from the cupboard, mingled with tones of suffering and entreaty, then a cry arose, and a noise as of a death-struggle. All, save Avon, who was transfixed by fear, rushed to the cupboard.

As the cry resounded he uttered:

"My father's voice, great Heavens!"

The door was wrenched open, for it seemed as if held from within, and as they struggled to do so the report of a gun appeared to shiver all the panes in the window, there rose the plaintive cry of a wounded deer, followed by dead silence, and then the door yielded.

All started back at the sight within, for the only things which remained of the skeleton were the wires, from which was suspended a human heart with its life-blood dropping on the ground. Avon Sedley seized his hat and rushed from the room in terror, and the last thing he beheld was volumes of smoke and flame issuing from the cupboard, which seemed to envelope all in their embrace.

As he fled from the house the flames rose higher and higher, like infernal arms, menacing Heaven. Higher! higher! higher! Talk of fire-engines, what could they do in a scene of such quick, overwhelming conflagration? They arrived, however, tearing along with steaming horses, and shouting rabble at their heels.

"Fire! fire! fire!"

The lugubrious cry resounded in Avon's ears as he rushed away from the scene. Water was pouring down the streets from opened pipes, but despite all the flames had taken complete possession of the whole frontage of the building.

"There—there," shouted the crowd, "I see faces beyond the flames—I see them!"

"I see them!"

"I see them!"

'Twas true. At moments the fierce fire seemed to part, as if to show those without the enclosed victims within, with upraised hands, struggling to burst through. Then they reclosed fiercer than ever, like a lion having tasted blood.

"Hark to their screams!" shuddered a woman.

"They be laughing!" cried a man.

"Larking! who'd lark at such a time?"

But a laugh did peal forth, one of triumph and mockery, far above the heads of that packed multitude, and then the whole building crumbled down into the flames, while volumes of smoke and dust rushed upwards.

Then no one could mistake the loud, pealing, derisive laugh which arose above all, it seemed to mount, fainter, fainter, like the song of the lark, and then rumbled away like distant thunder.

Not one within the building escaped to speak of the skeleton of Schwartz Brandt, except Avon Sedley, who fled before the house crashed down to dust and ashes.

Avon escaped, before the house fell in, and fled like one pursued by a demon. Gradually, as he placed distance between himself and the scene of the conflagration, his thoughts turned, towards her who on the morrow was to become his wife. He resolved, as far as possible, to dismiss all recollection of what had taken place, buoyed up with the idea and hope that all his late companions had escaped from the burning building, so he hurried onwards towards the abode of Leonora Verrill, whom he had so hardly won, and now so near the reward for all his anxious sufferings.

Leonora had been the child of doating parents, and in a position both by birth and fortune far above Avon Sedley; their engagement was one of those cases of predestination not often met with. They had met at a ball, three years before the commencement of this history, and though in subsequent meetings an unmistakable feeling of strong attraction towards one another existed, yet Avon durst not think of one placed so far above himself, he only a poor medical student. Leonora knew too much the difficulties she would have to encounter with her parents to encourage the feeling.

Avon quitted London, to return a few months later, and found the girl for whom he would have made any self-sacrifice engaged to another, and when they met Leonora's agitation too clearly proved that her heart and feelings were not interested in the projected marriage arranged by her parents. There was a pride in his heart which withheld him from giving utterance to one word of love, or regret, so they met and parted, she to return with her parents to their country seat, whence her marriage with her cousin was to take place, and Avon returned to his studies in the London hospitals.

Tremblingly he every day perused the London papers, dreading to see the announcement of the marriage of the girl he loved.

One day he saw a death recorded, not a marriage, which drove the blood bounding through his heart. The one who was to have called Leonora his own had been accidentally shot by a gamekeeper, and Leonora was free.

A thousand projects rushed through his brain. Should he write? No. Go and see her? No. He should wait, watch, and again, as if accidentally, meet her.

Once more the public prints informed him of her fate.

The family had sailed for Madeira on account of Leonora's health, so now indeed she seemed lost to him for ever.

Study, study, study, yet how do so effectually with that face and form ever before his eyes!

But seas run high and waves are rough, while fate bestrides them, engulfing everything.

The vessel was wrecked, and almost the only one saved was Leonora—an orphan. Both her parents were lost.

This time no pride, no poverty restrained him. He must see her.

She had been brought home into Plymouth Harbour by the ship which had found her lashed to a spar, and there Avon Sedley met her again. What could control the feelings of the persons so miraculously restored to one another? Few words were needed, and the result was that the poor girl, now more than a year an orphan, was to become the beloved wife on the morrow of Avon Sedley.

There was a lawsuit pending with some of her relatives respecting a large portion of her property. This suit gained by Leonora, and she would be very rich, which circumstance caused the remark of one of Avon's companions that she must love him well to quit a house like hers for that of a medical practitioner as yet without patients—for wealth too generally pairs with wealth. It will now be more fully comprehended why Avon shut his heart against every evil or painful thought, to give full scope to his immense love for Leonora; but yet there was tremor in his heart. She had been the object of so many strange accidents, what if she should never be his!

While walking briskly onwards towards her home from the scene we portrayed among his companions he laughed aloud as he thought this, yet it was a nervous, excited laugh, as if in derision of the absurd idea.

Suddenly he halted and turned very pale. Surely somebody laughed beside him—a low, sinister laugh, very unlike real mirth, yet not a soul was near.

The night was cold and frosty, Avon hurried along, stamping his feet, but not another footstep resounded on the hard pavement. Nobody appeared to be in the street, all had rushed in the opposite direction toward the fire.

"Mere fancy," ejaculated Avon, almost running to keep himself warm.

Again he stopped short.

There was a rattling noise beside him as of dry bones being shaken in a sack.

"By Heavens! I must be going mad," he thought, and now he really did run, stopping his ears with his fingers to shut out the horrible delusion. "Ha! There is her home, her home!"

And up the steps he flew. His hand was advanced toward the knocker.

"I'll rap for you!" uttered a voice in his ear.

He could not mistake it—it was the same which had uttered the word "Beware" from the cupboard.

With the words the knocker resounded, but mingled with the sound was the horrible rattle of dry bones which had startled him before that evening.

The door flew open, and Avon entered.

When he found himself in the presence of Leonora as she rose to welcome him, beaming in loveliness in the warmly lit drawing-room where she sat with her aunts and cousins, all these sinister thoughts and sensations vanished—they were dreams, visions, madness, the effect of a disordered fancy, of over-excitement, anything but truth.

"You have arrived sooner than I expected you," Leonora said, with her bright smile, "and as a punishment you must stay and hear the clocks announce our wedding day."

So he did. Midnight tolled, and as it did so there came a quick, pattering noise at the window.

"It must be hail!" all exclaimed but Avon, too well he recognized the sound.

Leonora hastened to the window, and, raising the heavy curtain, looked out.

"No," she said, turning round in surprise. "Tis a beautiful starlit night, but very cold;" she shivered as she said this from head to foot.

"Some passer-by saw the light and must have flung up gravel," said her aunt.

"How silly to do such a t-h-f-u-g," fell syllable by syllable from Leonora, whose teeth chattered audibly.

"Sit by the fire, dear child," said her aunt. "You are shivering from head to foot."

"I am very cold," articulated Leonora.

Avon shuddered as he placed an arm round her waist to support her to a seat, for at every step the same rattling sound seemed to follow them across the room.

On a low seat before the fire he placed her, still sustaining her, the fair, but now ghastly pale face lying upon his breast.

Her eyelids were closed, yet over the whole frame, and face too, passed convulsive fits of shivering.

"What is that?"

As he utters this exclamation he strains her wildly to his bosom.

What had he seen?

Only the room door open without touch or noise, wide, wide open it blew, as by a gust of wind, and in the doorway stood the very skeleton he had seen start from the cupboard, and in its hand it held a portion of a shattered wine glass, which shook in the trembling hand as if it would fall to pieces on the carpet.

No one seemed to notice the dreadful presence save Avon Sedley, and while he strained Leonora closer to his protecting bosom another sound smote upon his ear, a strange, hard breathing, a choking sound in the throat of her he loved, so madly.

A mocking laugh aroused him from the stupor creeping over him.

Leonora Verroll lay dead in his arms!

CHAPTER II.

THE wedding morning arrived.

In the horror and agitation of the household no one had thought of countermarching the bridal preparations or the invitations to the guests.

All had been hurry, agony, confusion—even hope for a moment, until the no longer disputed doom was sealed by the lips of sciences.

Leonora, the beautiful bride of a few hours before, full of rich young life, was no more. Cold, still and pale, she lay in her grave-clothes, and the virginal wreath she was to have worn at the altar sat in mockery of human hopes on her livid brow, while her hands were folded round the magnificent bouquet which Avon had sent.

He, poor fellow, was senseless for hours after the horrible truth became fully apparent, and while he lay thus beneath the same roof with his dead bride carriage after carriage drove up to the door, filled with wedding guests.

Peal upon peal resounded through the house, and only then did the painful omission become apparent that, occupied with the dead, the living had been forgotten.

On the third day Avon rose from his bed, scarcely in his senses or recognizable. His first thought was of Leonora. His she was, his madness argued, living or dead, and no one attempted to control the natural desire of seeing her.

So still, so pale and beautiful she looked—could Death be there? Surely he had only passed over and fanned her with his cold wings. She must have swooned at the touch.

Avon took the white hand lying on her bosom, with a cluster of early violets clasped in the fingers.

Strange! those hands were pliant though icy cold. Could she be dead, and thus?

As he gazed wildly upon her a mad longing seized him to possess the heart which had so unchangingly clung to him. He shuddered at the idea of that loving heart lying mouldering in the grave. If only he could obtain it it should be embalmed and his for ever.

He was alone. He would rescue it from the tomb. Softly he crept from the room and down the silent staircase. Not a soul but himself seemed living in that house.

Out of it he stole, like one who had committed some dreadful crime. But was he not rather meditating one—a desecration of the dead?

Down the cold, silent streets he flew; he had forgotten everything but Leonora. Not a sound of life reached his ears as he flew onward like the wind.

On, on, like rapid disease, mysterious and full of its own dreadful secret of motion. On, like a man in a dream, or bewildered by one overwhelming idea.

At last he reached his lodgings.

How strange this persistent silence was; could he be in a city of the dead—he the only living creature?

Up the stairs he bounded. He had let himself into the house, and he well knew where to lay his hand upon all which he required—his surgical instruments.

He carefully places them in his bosom. They are to make him master of her heart; there is some satisfaction left him in this world.

How easy it was to fly back through the usually crowded streets; not a soul was in them but himself; where could everyone be? He became perplexed at length by the ominous silence. He recollected that days he had lain in a stupor—had a plague visited the city? Were all dead? How long was he destined to wander in it thus? Did some one open the door of Leonora's house to him? He did not rap, yet he had entered, and found himself flying up the stairs noiselessly. Did some one let him in just when he was going to knock? Yes, he recollected glancing to see who it was, and perceived something like a shadow behind the hall door. It mattered not; he was in, and once more gazing upon the still, pale brow, so placid beneath its wreath of orange blossoms, as if the odour of the flowers had forced her to sleep.

"Leonora, my life! my soul! I come to claim the promise of your heart!"

Surely it was no mockery! She did smile, he could almost see the white teeth between the lips of pale coral.

So vivid was the impression upon his mind that he removed the wax lights, yet still she seemed to follow him wherever he moved, with that soft, coy smile of hers. He extinguished them; the smile made him thrill nervously, and then he recollected what old wives say, that the dead who are happy always smile on the third day.

Leonora had been all that time dead.

He recollected, too, that a light would be necessary to perform his task, so he relit the tapers, removed the violets from her hands and unclasped them.

The affiancing ring he had given her was still on her finger. Even the glitter of the gem made him nervous.

But no time was to be lost, morning would soon arrive. He placed the lights so that the full reflection fell upon the bosom of the dead girl.

Avon Sedley had been one of the most promising students in the hospitals and lecture-rooms, his nerve was proverbial, but he trembled now.

He laid down the knife which he had taken up, and kneeling down prayed more earnestly than he ever had done in his life, that his arm might be strengthened to perform the task self-imposed.

All fervent prayer is heard, we are told, and his assuredly was answered, for he rose strong to accomplish what he purposed doing. He wondered at the calm of his feelings, for it seemed to him now as if an ordinary post-mortem case lay before him. He forgot even Leonora for the moment, borne away by science from himself and his load of sorrows.

He placed all his requisite instruments beside him, and then baring his arm prepared for the task.

But nerved as he deemed himself, it was the first step which appalled him.

He advanced his hand, drew back, advanced again, and that first step was passed; the knife made a slight incision just above the heart.

To his amazement and horror, a thin red stream followed.

Aghast he stood with the knife in his trembling hand, gazing down upon it.

'Twas no optical delusion, for a drop from the knife fell on his left hand, and from the slight incision he had made the small red stream crept like frozen waters unbound.

Was it the flicker of the wax-light, or did the eyelids quiver? Was it delusion, or did the fingers unclasp? Oh, never dead girl looked up with eyes like those now opening upon him! They were haggard at first, but gradually, as they gazed, in terror and doubt, light and love returned to them—light which put that of the wax taper to shame—it seemed to illumine the whole room; and love such as she would feel thus restored from a living grave to a beloved being. And those half-clasped hands opened, while the arms were stretched out towards him, and there was no delusion then—she did smile, and the lips parted as if to speak.

"Mine, mine, mine once more!" he cried, almost breathless from emotion, as he strained her to his bosom, and while the murmuring tone of that intense rapture floated through the apartment, a clear, hollow, sinister laugh sounded in his ears.

It was the voice which he never could mistake for any other.

"Mine, too, mine!" it said. "The drop of maiden's blood on your hand, and on her bosom, seals you mine, ever mine, never to part!"

There are situations and moments in life so full of

happiness that we seem to defy fate to mix any alloy in our cup. We cannot at such moments comprehend misery.

Avon heard the wild laugh. He perfectly understood every scene in the drama enacted within the last few days, but what cared he now for any threats of sorrow? Leonora was restored from the dead, as it were; the grave could not have closed upon so much life, loveliness, and promise of happiness to him. He held her again to his bosom, he listened to her whispered assurances of unalterable love, and he looked round that room with a sort of defiant sense of possession.

"Mine!" echoed a hollow voice near.

"Leonora," he whispered, clasping his arms closely about her, "let us fly! I feel I dare not breathe freely till we have left all behind us! Something may part us if we linger here. What need have we to wait for ceremonial friends around us for our marriage? In some quiet village church you shall be mine, and there none will follow to part us."

"Your will is mine, Avon," fell from the lips he had not hoped to see again parted to reassure him of her love.

"Mine, Avon," echoed a low whisper beside him. The strange circumstance was that Leonora appeared perfectly unconscious of the mysterious voice, and, still stranger, whenever it spoke her whole frame trembled as if electrified.

"But this dress?" she suddenly exclaimed, looking down with amazement at her grave-clothes. "Why have they dressed me so?"

"Do you not recollect, dearest, you have been as one dead in your coffin, whence I have rescued you?"

"And this?" she asked, shudderingly, pointing at the red stain near her heart, while, as she spoke she held her arms extended wide apart, as if fearing to come in contact with it.

"Leonora, 'twas that purple stem which recalled you to life, restored you to me. I would have possessed myself of your heart, and you are mine now, soul and body, in dear life."

"I will but change this dress," she articulated, gliding from his encircling arms, "and then we will fly."

As she uttered these words she began nervously flitting about the room, gazing vacantly at many once familiar objects, like one but half awake. The coffin!—she stood some moments gazing wistfully down into the vacant place. She seemed incapable of comprehending the scene.

At last she noiselessly crept into the next room in her white-stockings, shoeless feet, whence she returned in a few moments completely attired in a walking dress, and apparently more composed, for the stain which had terrified her existed no longer on her dress.

Avon himself seemed bewildered as he gazed upon her. He could not comprehend the strange caleness of one who had just passed through so fearful an ordeal.

"Now I am ready, Avon," she whispered. "Come, or they will part us again."

He endeavoured to advance, yet it seemed as if some unseen power prevented him from moving to follow out his heart's desire. Flight—speed—anxiety, were in his thoughts, but, as we often experience in dreams, the will was there, but the acting power was counteracted by some strange agency. He saw her quit the room and fly down the corridor as noiselessly as a phantom.

She stopped at the top of the stairs, and impatiently beckoned him to follow. Still he was powerless to overtake her, for he could not leave evidences all about of his visit, for his case of instruments had been emptied of its contents, which were scattered about.

By sign he implored her to wait.

"Come, come," she articulated, so distinctly that the voice seemed even at that distance to fill the passage and ring in his ears.

"Go, go, why don't you go?" another voice uttered, in cold, measured tones. "I will give you till the bottom of those stairs to reach her; after that, if you fail, she is mine!"

Avon made one desperate rush forward, half his instruments remained scattered about, but, after all, what did it signify? He and Leonora would be far away before morning; so let the truth be discovered then—what would he care? He reached the staircase at last, one stride appeared to have accomplished the deed, but she was gone. Gone, and not even a sound of her footsteps could he hear.

"Leonora, wait for mercy's sake!"

Not a sound, a breath, a tone. The very house seemed dead, all was so silent. Where were everybody? Was there no one to stop her in her strange flight? He forgot how anxious he had been to conceal her from all.

Down the stairs at a bound he sprang, and out of the hall door, and as he closed it behind him, the

hollow, rattling sound which he knew too well saluted his ears, then a laugh and the ominous words, "Mine now!"

At that moment a man passed by.

"Have you," Avon said, addressing him, "seen a lady leaving this house? She was very pale, like one just risen from the grave."

The man stared at him—the stolid look of one only accustomed to ordinary events and questions.

"A lady?" he responded. "How was she dressed?"

"I don't know; but she was tall and pale, with golden hair. Which way did she go?"

"I've seen no such person," was the reply, as the speaker turned away.

He thought the other in his agony was mad with strong drink.

Avon accosted all he met; none had seen her.

Then he retraced his steps to the house, and was on the point of rapping boldly to tell the truth, and solicit aid. For whither could Leonora have fled? She must have concealed herself in the house.

His hand was raised to the knocker—it was now the small hours of the morning, when suddenly voices arose around him. One said:

"That's he who stole the body!"

He could not mistake the tone, he had heard it so often within the last few days; it was his haunting demon who spoke—spirit, wizard, or whatever he or it was.

Another voice replied, as a heavy hand grasped his shoulder:

"You wanted to know just now, sir, where a lady had gone? Well, now, I can tell you something about a dead body, I think."

It was the policeman to whom he had first addressed himself.

"Body!" he exclaimed, starting in terror and amazement. "She is not dead! You do not mean to say that she is dead again?"

"Come, come, sir," the man answered, with the stern tone of official consequence, "there is no use striving to appear as if you were simple or innocent in this matter. You know you asked me about a lady a while ago?"

"I know I did; a lady who had mysteriously fled."

A low laugh sounded beside him, though no one but the officer was near.

"Yes, a lady, but a dead one," was the sneering answer, "and not so mysteriously gone, when all is told—those who hide can find. A little gentleman, queer, odd-looking one, came to me a while ago, and said a dead body had been stolen out of this house. I thought it was a joke, he seemed so odd, but I rapped and asked as he bade me, and found the whole house in confusion and terror, and a lady had sure enough been carried off!"

"But don't I tell you she is alive?" Avon cried, in anguish at the man's obstinacy.

"Prove it then, sir. The little gentleman pointed to you as you came up, and said you'd done it!"

"Where's my accuser?"

"Well, he was here a minute ago. He's gone into the house, I suppose," and the policeman looked about, while Avon vainly struggled to free himself from his grasp.

"It's no use, no use whatever, sir," exclaimed the policeman, firmly grasping the collar of Avon's coat to detain him, "you must come quietly, and be identified or not."

Avon struggled no more; he resolved to go in, and, if possible, discover the hiding-place of Leonora. So he entered the home where she had been loved and cherished, now filled with mystery and cruel surmises.

(To be continued.)

MEN WITHOUT HEARTS.—We sometimes meet with men who seem to think that any indulgence in an affectionate feeling is weakness. They will return from a journey, and greet their families with a distant dignity, and move among their children with the cold and lofty splendour of an iceberg surrounded by its broken fragments. There is hardly a more unnatural sight on earth than one of these fathers without a heart. A father had better extinguish a boy's eyes than take away his heart. Who that has experienced the joys of friendship would be robbed of the hidden treasures of his heart? Who that values sympathy in affliction, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery? Cherish, then, your heart's best affections. Indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, paternal and fraternal love.

A WIFE'S POWER.—A good wife is to a man wisdom, strength and courage; a bad one is confusion, weakness and despair. No condition is hopeless to a man where the wife possesses firmness, decision and economy. There is no outward propriety which can

counteract indolence, extravagance and folly at home. No spirit can long endure bad influence. Man is strong; but his heart is not adamant. He needs a tranquil mind; and especially if he is an intelligent man, with a whole head, he needs its moral force in the conflict of life. To recover his composure, home must be a place of peace and comfort. There his soul renews its strength, and goes forth with renewed vigour to encounter the labour and troubles of life. But if at home he finds no rest, and is there met with bad temper, jealousy and gloom, or assailed with complaints and censure, hope vanishes, and he sinks into despair.

WHAT IS LIFE?

OUR life is a strange combination of the mortal and the immortal, physical and mental existence. The mystic link connecting the soul and body, what mortal mind can comprehend? The spring that moves to action—that invisible monitor which prompts us to think, act and feel, who can understand? Without this silent though powerful agent, the frail, delicately organized physical system dies, and is utterly powerless. This life of ours is indeed a problem; even the most learned, and those who have ever been searching out its mystic connections, cannot comprehend its awful significance.

The physical system is indeed wonderful; the circulation of the blood (the discovery of which theory was considered one of the greatest advancements of the age), respiration, uniting the vital gas, oxygen, with the blood; the nervous system, transmitting sensations to and from the brain; the features of the face, beautiful in all their graceful curves and outlines, besides expressing the emotions of the soul within, all are alike wonderful. How beautiful the wise design which formed the countenance to be the medium by which the soul communicates with the outer world!

How varied, also, are the circumstances and conditions of existence! The relations we sustain to others, the ties of friendship and family, and our influence on others. Circumstances cause life to assume varied aspects. Sunshine and shadow trace their impress on the mind, and give us either weal or woe. Step by step advancing, the path diverges, bringing events entirely dissimilar from those preceding. Experience teaches us to anticipate events, and meet them with courage; but, nevertheless, the more one learns by experience, the less their self-efficiency.

Who can tell us what life really is? Whose experience has been so vast as to determine all the secret emotions which thrill the soul? We may not know our nearest friend perfectly, for locked in his bosom may live some sweet, sad dream unrealized, some hope of life destroyed which made life assume another phase to him. Ask the aged man, whose white hair tells of the frost, cold and storm, which has destroyed the verdure of summer's bloom, stricken its thrifty growth, and blasted its fairest flowers, if he clings to life.

"Ah, life has grown weary to me, and full of sorrow, and fain would I seek some milder clime!" he cries.

Ask the man in the fulness and strength of manhood if he loves life.

"The busy world is before me; its surging crowd around; I must work, yes, toil! Who will gain for me those honours and attainments yet above me? I must toil up the rugged hill, to reach a station where men shall look up to me, and do me honour. My ambition and hopes are already at the eve of their fruition."

The youth, with merry laugh and cheery smiles, cries:

"Life is sweet. What if some find it brings sorrow? Not so for me! Sunshine shall flood my pathway, and every pleasure earth can procure shall be mine."

To live is a privilege few can estimate. To live for a purpose, making others happy, improving our own opportunities by cultivating our good desires, refining and strengthening the intellect, is noble. Live nobly, as befits immortal spirits which have an inheritance of eternal life—which shall be witnesses of the roll of ages, and the mighty revolutions of the universe. Can one's life be too well employed with this in view? What account shall we render to Him who gave his life that we might live?—J. R. B.

A NEW MECHANICAL CUTTER-OUT.—A firm of ready-made clothiers have just introduced a new machine for cutting out garments which will be the means of saving much labour. The "band machine" generally in use for cutting out shirts and other articles is ill adapted for cutting out heavy garments, some more expeditious and accurate tool being needed. In this machine the scissors action is substituted for the revolving blade. A piece of steel about a inch and a half long descends upon a slot, and thus cuts its way when propelled by steam at the rate of 700 "snips" a minute, covering at the same

time over two yards of material. The latter is drawn into the scissors by two feed-wheels, an upper and lower, which are placed in front of the slot. The grip of the feed-wheels, which depends on the height of the pile to be cut, is regulated by a handle with spring attached, and having a thumb-plate above not unlike a patent lever corkscrew. The main feature, however, of the new machine is that there is no necessity for moving about and guiding the cloth. The portion of the machine visible above the table rests upon a circular plate imbedded in the table and which revolves upon a pivot, the motive power being derived from underneath through a tube. The operator, by guiding the handle, can follow the curves with delicacy and celerity without so much as touching the material. One knife is capable of cutting from 800 to 1,000 garments per day, the scissors cutting through 24-ply to 192-ply, according to the thickness of the fabric.

THE MUTINEERS' SHIP.

I HAD command of the old "Evershot," a good ship, and one which had put much money into the hands of her owners. She had been built for the India trade, and with the exception of one voyage to Smyrna she had struck to the purpose for which she had been put together. On the occasion of the present adventure I was bound for India, with an assorted and valuable cargo. I had a few passengers, among whom were three officers going out to join their regiments after a long furlough in England.

We had doubled the southern capes of Africa; and were working well into the Indian Ocean, when a look-out in the fore-top reported a sail directly ahead, in the line of our course.

"Some homeward bound Indianman, probably," remarked Mr. Lee, my mate.

The wind was now a little south of east, so that we stood upon our course north-east with freedom. The coming ship had been heading directly toward us, but as we came nearer she seemed inclined to keep away to the westward.

"Is it an English ship?" asked one of my passengers—a gray-haired old man.

I told him I thought it was. Just as I answered, my second mate came down from the fore-top, where he had been with a glass. I observed that his face wore a troubled look, and that he was anxious to speak, and his glance at the aged passenger gave me to understand that he cared not to speak in his presence. I took not the hint, and walked forward. At the gangway Mr. Becket, the mate in question, stopped me.

"What is it?" I asked. "Captain," he replied, trembling, "the ship ahead of us is the 'Dorset'! There's not another ship from England with a figure-head like hers. Those three Graces, with their flowing drapery, are not to be mistaken."

"Are you sure the ship in the distance has that figure-head?"

"Yes sir, You'll be able to see it from here pretty soon."

"But," said I, "the 'Dorset' has not yet had time to reach Sydney, let alone getting back as far as this."

"Of course she hasn't," acknowledged Becket; "but," he added, casting a quick glance around, "didn't you ever hear of ships being turned from their true course without the orders of their proper commanders?"

"Ah!" I uttered thus much, and then bowed my head beneath the stroke of my mate's intimation. "You remember what sort of a cargo the 'Dorset' took out?" Becket suggested.

I remember very well; for I had met her captain on the very day before he sailed, and dined with him. He was one of my oldest and best friends—Harry Bumstead his name was, and as good a sailor as ever trod the deck. The facts, as I knew them were these: The "Dorset" had sailed two weeks before I did, taking out twenty-three convicts who had been sentenced to transportation. These, of course, he was to drop at Sydney or Port Jackson; and as he had part of a cargo for that place, he was to make that his first port. So I knew that the "Dorset" had no business to be running out from the Indian Ocean at this time.

"What do you think about it?" asked Becket, who had been watching me narrowly.

I asked him to let me take the glass, and with it I went upon the horse-block, and set the focus. The coming ship was now so near that her hull was up, with her figure-head entirely upon the water-line. I turned the glass in that direction, and a moment's scrutiny told me that my mate was right. There could be no mistaking the three graceful, intertwined figures that adorned the head of the "Dorset's" cutwater.

"Mr. Becket," I said, stepping back to his side, "that is the 'Dorset' and no mistake."

"So I am sure. And what do you make of her present course?"

"What do you make of it?" I asked, not for want of information, but from a shrinking from being the first to give words to a terrible truth.

He answered, promptly.

"I think the convicts have taken the ship!"

"So do I!"

And having thus spoken I walked aft to where my first mate stood by the wheel, and taking him aside told him my fears. He leaped upon the rail, and gazed off upon our neighbour, and was soon by my side again, and greatly agitated.

"It is certainly as you say, captain. What shall we do?"

Aye—what could we do? The ship was now within half a mile of us, and all question as to her identity was at an end. We knew her to be the "Dorset," and it was equally evident that the convicts had by some means gained possession.

"She had not only convicts," said Lee, "but there were men among her crew not fit to be trusted. One or two of them, at least, I knew for as precious scamps as ever went unhung."

This made the matter still worse. Of my whole available force I could muster but thirty men, counting the three able-bodied passengers. I had set five of my crew on shore at St. Helena, ill with fever, and had been unable at the time to make their places good.

On board the "Dorset," in all probability, there would be the three-and-twenty convicts, and very likely a part of the crew. From Mr. Lee's representation it would be safe to conclude that a majority of her crew might be found in mutiny. What should we do? To allow the ship to pass on under such circumstances seemed hardly the thing for an English officer, and to openly engage such a force would be sheer madness. I asked my officers what they thought, and they could only answer that I must think, and they would stand by me. And the three military officers said the same.

During this time the ship in question had been nearing us, we having steered so as to speak her, and when she was near enough under our lee bow, I hailed her:

"Ship ahoy!"

"Hullo!" was the answer.

"What ship is that?"

"The 'Ocean Star.'"

"Where are you bound?"

"To America."

"Do you belong there?"

"Aye, aye!"

At this point she had ranged ahead far enough so that I could see that she had the American ensign at her peak, which had been before hidden by her canvas. There were from thirty to forty men leaning over her rail, and I knew that we could not openly overcome them. I cannot tell how I felt at that moment; but I know, had I been near enough I would have boarded her at all hazards. What had become of Harry Bumstead, and the few men who might have remained faithful to him?

While thoughts were whirling painfully through my brain the "Dorset" passed on, and as she passed I saw a face at one of the quarter windows. I opened my glass and levelled it. It was the face of Captain Harry Bumstead, and he waved a handkerchief with every sign of distress.

I was becoming dizzy and weak with shame and pain, when an idea flashed upon me that caused me to leap and cry out with joy. It came full-formed, like an inspiration from Heaven.

"Put the ship upon her course again," I ordered.

"We can do nothing?" said Becket, interrogatively.

"Wait," said I. "It isn't too late yet."

"But—"

"Hold on! When I have my plan shaped you shall know it."

It was now quite late, for the sun had touched the horizon of the waters when the "Dorset" passed us. I watched the receding ship until darkness and distance hid her from me, and I knew she was bound for the Atlantic. I had seen her shorten sail for the night, and with the last view she had been steering south-west.

As soon as the curtain of night had fallen I ordered the ship to be worn around upon the other tack, and having set her course due south, I crowded on all sail. When all had been belayed on the new tack, the officers and men crowded around anxious to know what I meant.

"I mean," I answered, "that I will have those villains safely in irons again if I can."

"But how?" came from half the crew at a breath.

And I told them.

"Our ship is by all odds the swiftest sailer, even with equal canvas, but now that the 'Dorset' has only topgallant-sails set over double-reefed topsails, while we are now carrying everything, we shall shoot ahead fast. By midnight I calculate to be enough further south than she can be to make a run to the westward, and lie in wait for her. We know

her course, and by careful reckoning cannot fail to strike it."

"And what then?"

"I can tell you better when the time comes. Stand by me, and I'll be careful."

The breeze held good and fair, and with studding-sails below and aloft we spanked on until midnight, at which time I knew we must be much further south than the "Dorset." Then I changed the course to west-south-west, and at three o'clock, after careful computation, I believed I was where I should be.

As soon as this had been decided I gave orders for heaving-to, and taking in sail. I sent down the lofty yards, sent the topgallant-masts on deck, and housed the topmasts.

While this was being done the passengers had been bringing the arms on deck and making them ready, and I had more than enough for a cutlass and a brace of pistols for each man.

I had just got the pumps rigged when the look-out aloft reported a sail. I hastened forward, and I could distinctly discern the sharp lines of the top-hammer of a heavy ship against the sky. I put myself in her way; ran up signal-lanterns; and set men at work at my pumps.

When she had come near enough she put down her helm, and laid her course to run under our stern.

"Ship ahoy!" came from the "Dorset"—for I had distinguished her figure-head, and I knew her.

Fearing that the villains might recognize my voice, I instructed Lee to answer for me:

"Aye! aye! Send us a boat. We've sprung a leak, and are sinking!"

"Who are ye?"

"The 'Amphitrite' of Liverpool."

"What ye got aboard?"

"Furniture, and provisions, and a hundred thousand pounds in gold!"

The "Dorset" heave-to, and lowered a boat, which was very soon alongside full of men; and villainous men they looked to be as they came over the side.

"Ye haven't settled much in the water," remarked one of their number.

"We've kept the pumps going till we can't pump any more," I said.

"Well, where's yer gold? Let's have that first."

"This way," I said, moving towards my cabin-door.

When abreast the after pump I gave the signal agreed upon for the men to stop pumping; and in a moment more I gave another signal agreed upon. I shouted:

"Down, every man!"

The man of the mutineers nearest me fell by my hand, and others fell as quickly. Only fifteen men had come off in the boat, and as they were taken completely by surprise they were captured and ironed before they could fully understand what was the matter.

"Ship ahoy!" I shouted, through my trumpet, imitating as nearly as possible the voice of the man who had fallen under my hand.

"Hullo!" came in reply.

"Send another boat. We can't bring half. Hurry! The old thing's sinking!"

Another boat soon came alongside with ten men in it. As they came over the rail they were taken from behind, and secured without bloodshed.

My course was now simple. We had five-and-twenty of the villains safely under our charge, and having seen them so securely bound that they could not move, I called twenty-four of my men into the two boats alongside, leaving only six in charge of the ship. We pulled for the "Dorset," and as we came to under her gangway we saw a few men looking over the rail; but we had taken the precaution to put on the Scotch caps of the convicts, and they did not suspect. Becket was the first upon her deck, and I followed.

"Got the gold?" asked a burly fellow, whom I recognized at once as the boatswain of the ship, and one of the precious villains of whom Lee had spoken.

"It is in the boats," answered Becket. "Rig a whip, and we'll soon have it aboard."

The fellow turned at once to see to the rigging of the whip. I saw that my men had all come over the side, and I gave the signal. We had no particular need to be careful of life now, for two of the prisoners on board my ship had confessed the crime of which those had been guilty who held the "Dorset" in charge. The chief of the mutineers I cut down with my own hand. Beside him there were only sixteen to deal with. Four others were killed outright, while I lost not a man. They were overcome and secured, and then I made my way to the star-board quarter gallery, where I found and embraced Captain Harry Bumstead.

In the hold we found fifteen of the crew in irons. Bumstead explained to me in a few words what had happened. Only six days before the boatswain who had shown much insubordination during the voyage,

headed nineteen of the crew, who had joined him, and having set the convicts free, they made an easy victory over the others. The first and second mates they had killed, and the boatswain had been in favour of putting all his prisoners to death; but the majority of the mutineers, as well as most of the convicts, refused to have it done. So it had been arranged that the captain and his fifteen true men should be set on shore upon the first out-of-the-way island that came in their way.

After due deliberation it was arranged that Bumstead should proceed to Sydney with his fifteen faithful men, he feeling assured that he could confine the convicts so that they would be safe. I helped him iron and secure his prisoners, and then I took the mutineers of his crew aboard my own ship. There were fifteen of them, five having been killed during the conflict.

That morning the "Dorset" stood away for Australia, while I put my head once more upon my course. We arrived safely in Calcutta, where I delivered up my prisoners. Before I was ready to set sail for the return voyage Captain Bumstead joined me, and very shortly thereafter we saw the mutineers suffer the extreme penalty of the laws which they had outraged. S. C. J.

HOW TO GET THIN.

OBESITY has been regarded in all ages and by nearly all people as a great misfortune. Some of the Gentiles enter their dwellings by a hole in the roof, and if a person is so fat that he cannot get in they regard him as an outlaw, swelled out big with sin. In China obesity is considered a blessing. In that country no man's mind is measured by his corporate bulk.

Many remedies have been resorted to; vinegar and other acids have been used. Darwin thinks that salt and salt meat are efficacious.

Mr. Banting became very fat and strove by all sorts of means to rid himself of his encumbrance, and at last hit upon a method which he took great pains to communicate to others. This was to live exclusively on meat. In 1863 Mr. Banting published a pamphlet giving the secret of his relief. He tells us that the sorts of food which he particularly advises fat people to avoid are "butter, sugar, potatoes, milk and beer."

Banting's system has attracted considerable attention. Thousands of the more obese Germans have tried it, but now few believe in it—not that it will not reduce the flesh, for it will certainly do that, but because it reduces it by producing a diseased condition, particularly of the kidneys. Many grave cases of disease of the kidneys produced by the Banting system are reported from Germany.

The only safe and effective treatment of obesity is a reduction in the quantity of the usual food, an increase of exercise, and a reduction of the hours of sleep. This should be gradually pushed until the reduction in weight is one or two pounds a week. This cannot fail and will invariably improve the health.—B. T. F.

THE statue of Napoleon I. with the traditional hat which Louis Philippe placed at the summit of the Vendôme column, is to be reinstated in its old position as soon as the monument is restored.

A FORGOTTEN GREAT MAN.—Louis Kossuth, the once famous Dictator of Hungary, is now in Turin, where he supports himself by giving lessons in German, English, and Hungarian, earning less than 50*l.* a year. He is very old, his hair entirely white, his cheeks wan and hollow, and his eyes utterly dimmed. His wife and children are dead, and he is left alone in his old age. A visitor thus describes his room: "Against the rear wall stood a narrow plain bed. On the walls hung portraits of Mazzini and Louis Napoleon. On the book-shelf by my side I noticed Hugo's 'Année Terrible,' 'Kinglake's 'Crimes' and ten or twelve well-worn grammars. On a table, close to the bed, lay a loaf of bread, and a plate of dried meat."

DANCING.—The exercise of dancing is favourable to health, and the graceful development of the body; but, like all physical exercise, it must be pursued at seasonable times, and under such circumstances as are dictated by nature, or it will become hurtful. With every additional movement of the limbs the respiration is increased, and the lungs take in a larger supply of air; and this, if not pure, will act upon the system with the virulence of a poison. We need hardly say, what must be obvious to every one who has breathed it, that the atmosphere of the crowded ball-room is not in the condition suitable to health. Better no exercise at all than exercise under such unfavourable circumstances. Indeed, ball-room dancing frequently becomes a source, as we all know, of prostration and ill-health. No frequenter of the crowded ball-room will pretend that he or she, after a long night's indulgence in its pleasures, sleeps more soundly, awakes more refreshingly, and resumes the duties or labours of the day with a lighter

step and a lighter spirit. The looks are certainly not improved. Whatever, therefore, may be said in favour of fashionable dancing as a social element, it cannot be justified as an exercise favourable to the health and beauty of the body. The best physical discipline is to be found in regular and cheerful exercise in the open air. Those sports, which are often termed manly, but are no less womanly, as riding, boating, ball-playing, and brisk walking, are the best means of not only giving strength to the body, but endowing it with grace of form and motion.

SCIENCE.

HARDENING THE SURFACE OF STEEL.—Mr. G. Armes has proved that the surface of steel may be hardened, without hardening the mass of the metal, by placing the steel—a cylinder for example—upon an engine lathe, and, while it is in motion, bringing into contact with it an emery wheel, rotating at a velocity of above 1,800 revolutions a minute.

SILVERING GLASS.—Aldehyde-ammonia is used by Herr R. Siemens as a reducing agent for silvering glass. A mixture of nitrate of silver and ammonium aldehyde—the latter prepared by passing dry ammonia-gas into aldehyde—is poured on to the cleaned surface of the glass, and gradually heated to about 50 deg. Centigrade, when the reduction of the silver commences, the metal being precipitated at first as a black film, and afterwards of its characteristic colour and lustre.

AN IMPORTANT MEDICAL QUESTION IN COURT.—In a capital case lately tried before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, medical evidence was given on one side showing that it was impossible to distinguish with certainty human blood from that of a horse, and, on the other side, evidence was given showing that the difference between these two kinds of bloods is distinctly revealed by the microscope. The remarkable fact here involved presents itself in the light of the investigations made by eminent men of science in Europe, and with concurrent results, showing that, though there are, beyond question, differences of size, determinable by careful micrometric measurement—the human corpuscles thus appearing to be on an average larger than those of the horse—yet, even in fresh blood, these differences have been found so slight as to be recognised only with extreme difficulty. In human blood the corpuscles are seen to vary from 3,000 to 5,000 in an inch, the average being 3,500. In horse blood the same variations exist, the average being 4,600—so that very small human corpuscles and very large horse corpuscles might be placed side by side and found equal in size. This is in fresh blood. In dried blood the differences are almost blotted out, so that it has been universally agreed that when blood has once become dry, it is not possible to distinguish with certainty the blood of one mammal from that of another.

SCIENCE FOR RUM DRINKERS.—Dr. Brunton remarked that the performance of the vital functions depended on oxidation of the tissues and Professor Bins's observation that this was lessened by alcohol was the key to an explanation of its physiological effects. These may be nearly all explained on the supposition that the power of the nervous system is diminished, different parts of it becoming successively paralyzed. First, the vaso-motor nerves become affected, and the blood nerves consequently dilated. After a glass or two of wine, the hands may be noticed to be of a very red colour and plump, showing that arterial blood is flowing freely through the capillaries, and at the same time the veins are dilated and full. All the vessels of the body, however, are not dilated at the same time. In some persons those of the stomach or intestines become dilated; and the blood being thus abstracted from the head, the brain becomes anemic, and the individual dull and sleepy. In others the arteries of the head become dilated first, and in consequence the brain receives a full supply of blood, and the intellect becomes more vigorous. If this stage is not passed, the functions return to their normal condition, and no harm ensues; but if more alcohol is taken, the paralysis extends to other parts of the nervous system.

THE MOON.

ACCORDING to Professor R. A. Proctor, who has recently delivered a series of astronomical lectures, the moon's diameter is 2,100 miles, and she is distant 238,828 miles. Her surface is less than our globe in the proportion of 1 to 13½, or in other words includes about 14,600,000 square miles. The volume of the moon is to that of the earth as 1 to 49½, and the relative masses as 1 to 81.

The optical image formed by the object glass of the astronomer has defects, and if the image is magnified defects are also magnified. Beyond a certain point it is useless to magnify the image as it appears, and there is no hope of any telescope larger than Lord Rosse's to get a close view of the moon. It is

hopeless to expect to find signs of life on our satellite, for the moon has no atmosphere. This is shown by the fact that shadows thrown by the lunar mountains are seen black, whereas did an atmosphere exist they would vary in intensity. Also when the moon passes over a star the latter flashes out suddenly; if there were an atmosphere the star would be seen precisely as our sun when sinking.

The moon has no water, for if she had, and if even a shallow atmosphere existed, the water would be raised into the latter, and decrease or increase the streaks or markings which appear on the great floor. In answer to the question: Where then has the water gone? four suggestions are made. The first is that a comet carried away the lunar oceans and atmosphere. The second, that the surface is covered with frozen snow. The objection to the latter is that there is no sign of whiteness which would then appear, for in fact the colour of the moon is about that of weather-beaten brown sand. The third idea is that the lunar oceans have been withdrawn into the substance of the moon; and the fourth is that the moon is egg-shaped, and that the centre of gravity, being displaced on the farther side, has carried to that side the oceans and air of the moon, and that the side of the moon never toward us may be a comfortable abode of life.

The moon changes and shifts not merely with regard to the sun, but to the earth, and Professor Proctor calculates that 1,300 years must elapse before any part would be again presented in precisely the same view. She is unlike our earth in general conditions. The total lunar day lasts 29½ of our days, but the year is very much less than ours, and is only 346 days. This is due to a slow tilting, corresponding to the precession of the equinoxes.

As to the lunar crater, Professor Proctor stated that on the moon's surface there is a pounding down of meteoric missiles, not necessarily solid ones, but a falling down of meteors on the plastic surface. At the present day it is estimated that over 400,000,000 meteors fall through the day, but the result is very slight indeed. The speaker found that the earth would require 400,000,000 years to have her diameter increased a single inch by them. While the earth was still in a form of vaporous matter the moon was rolling on, still plastic, and these meteors, falling down upon her surface, would produce that pitted appearance.

Professor Proctor proceeded to say that the problem which astronomers have to solve, in determining the distance of the stars, is one of stupendous difficulty. A change of \$3,000,000 miles in the place of observation causes no perceptible alteration in the direction of many stars. Alpha Centauri changes its position in the year apparently less than the distance passed over by the minute hand of a watch in the two-hundredth part of a second. It is 210,000 times farther away than our own sun is. The large star presents no disc to the telescope, hence its light must be measured. The star above named shines three times as brightly and its surface is five times as large as that of our sun. Sirius is 100 times brighter, and in volume 2,000 times as large. The spectroscopic shows that these stars are all suns.

Some stars are found to be double and show very well-marked colours, some red, some orange, some blue, and so on. These owe their colours not to the inherent nature of their inner light, but to the qualities of the envelopes that surround them; and the idea has been suggested that we have there a process by which these stars are perhaps passing down to a cooler state. Probably Jupiter and Saturn at one time may have been visible as accompanying stars, small complements to our sun, and they at that time may have shown some colours well marked in comparison with his.

Compared with the stars' distance the whole orbit of our earth sinks into insignificance. And remember that the least of these stars—its mere disc—has enormous heating power; then remember how great the distance from star to star; and then consider that the nebulous matter is spread through these stars, and continues from one star to another, and you have an idea of the wonderful extension of that matter. For a long time the theory was that this nebulous matter was far out in space from the stars, but it is now proved that there is a real connection between this nebulous matter and the stars seen in the same view.

Kepler imagined that the centre of the universe was the solar system, and that the light and heat of the sun spread out and was caught by a shell 70 miles in thickness, enclosing the stars. Wright supposed that our starry system was one of several and like a cloven disc.

Professor Proctor stated that he hoped to take one telescope and survey the whole heavens, counting the number of stars in different directions (not a field here and a field there, as Herschel did), little square fields, side by side, in the heavens, counting the number and mapping the results; and then seeing

where the stars shown by that telescope are richly or poorly distributed.

The stars have a wonderfully rapid motion. The process of change in a block of granite is relatively greater than those processes in the still heavens, yet these stars are every one travelling 20 and 30 miles in a second, and not a star in the heavens but has some motion. Five of the stars of the Great Bear are travelling in a common direction, and apparently at a common rate. It is a well known fact that if we approached a star or other source of illumination rapidly, the waves of light will be shortened, otherwise they will be lengthened; the lines in the spectrum will be displaced, and we shall know whether the star is approaching or receding. Dr. Huggins found that these stars were receding at the rate of 11 miles in every second of time.

There is another sign of change in the stars; a gathering in a certain region. There is, in point of fact, a vast variety where everything is regular. We see streams, and modules, and branches of brightness, and it seems that when the astronomer has penetrated into the recesses of the milky way he has no more reached the bounds of the universe than he had at the beginning of his research.

If we look around at the condition of the planetary system, we find much to lead us to the belief that it grew to its present state, that there was a process of its development. There are 8 primary planets and 134 asteroids, and all these bodies travel in the same direction round the sun. Then every one of the bodies whose motion has been determined turns in the same direction. There are in fact so many similarities that we are bound by the laws of probability to believe in the evolution process, for the chance of 142 planets going round in the same direction is one in 2,774,800,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

Laplace, in his explanation of this motion, had the idea that there was a great nebulous mass having the sun in the centre, extending on either side far beyond the present extension of the path of the uttermost planet, that is, a path of 5,000,000,000 miles diameter. That mass was intensely hot and vaporous, and it was rotating; and as the rotating mass contracted and it began to rotate more rapidly, a ring was thrown off, which would gradually break up, its parts would gradually amalgamate; many parts would have different rates of motion, and different parts would encounter each other, and in the course of millions of ages there would be an amalgamation into one mass, having the same direction of motion that the nebulous mass had, and travelling round a centre which was the sun. That process would go on until one planet after another was formed.

There was no light given by the Laplace theory in reference to the questions connected with the asteroids; he simply stated the general facts and left them there. It seemed to Professor Proctor that they were led to another theory, and he would adopt a method of illustrating it which he deemed suitable. If an insect of a few hours' existence endeavoured to trace the history of a tree in which it lived, it could not during its own life arrive at the truth; but by transmissions of slight knowledge the result of study for ages, the species would eventually arrive at the truth. We know that as one nebulous mass passes into another, by chemical means, light is produced.

There would be one centre of aggregation which would grow continually in size and power, gradually drawing more and more matter to it; and the more it drew in of these nebulous masses, the greater its power would become. Professor Daniel Kirkwood took the paths of the asteroids, and arranged them in their order of distance, and he found certain places where, for some distance there were no asteroids. He noted where the gaps occurred, and he found them corresponding to the paths of asteroids having periods commensurate with the period of Jupiter. Jupiter would disturb the motion of the asteroids, if they had a period like his own, and would prevent them from travelling, his mass being so much greater. This supports the theory that the solar system arose from the motion and aggregations, not from the contraction of a great nebulous mass. The rings of Saturn give further evidence of the same.

In the star clouds we find a multitude of stars describable with the telescope, and so closely clustered as to be irresolvable; and in these masses or cloudbets we see proof that the sidereal system is not a mere aggregation of stars, but contains all varieties, nebulae, star cloudbets, and stars of all varieties; and that it resembles the solar system, not in uniformity, but in variety of structure. In studying its laws we have a problem of enormous difficulty, but one which must one day be solved. The lecturer concluded by portraying the glory of scientific study, which brought man into a nearer and closer knowledge of his Maker.

LEGEND OF THE FELT HAT.—There is a legend among the hatmakers that felt was invented by no less

a personage than St. Clement, the patron saint of their trade. Wishing to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and at the same time to do penance for sundry unexpiated peccadilloes, the pious monk started on his journey afoot. As to whether he was afflicted with corns or kindred miseries, the ancient chronicle from which this information is derived is silent; but at all events, a few days' successive tramping soon began to blister his feet. In order to obtain relief, it occurred to him to line his shoes with the fur of a rabbit. This he did, and, on arriving at his destination, was surprised to find that the warmth and moisture of his feet had worked the soft hair into a cloth-like mass. The idea thus suggested he elaborated in the solitude of his cell, and, finally, there being no patent laws in existence in those days, he gratuitously presented to his fellow-mortals the result of his genius in the shape of a felt hat.

A FREAK OF FATE.

EVA SPRING was sitting, her hands idly clasped in her lap, her blue eyes wandering over the trim lawn that, skirted by shady trees, went down to the river's edge. Such a green lawn. Such blue skies above it. Such a wealth of June roses on the overhanging bushes that threw their prodigal arms over the time-stained walls of the house, and within the old-time garden, that was separated from the lawn by a hedge of box-wood, "bloomed and bloomed and bloomed."

Eva Spring had blue eyes, both large and sunny, a delicate complexion with a fresh apple-blossom colour, a graceful, girlish figure, and an expression not so much happy as serene and content, the sort of content that one would associate more with the mellow completeness of October than with the untidied glories of the early summer.

Well, Eva had a right to the serene peace that waits upon a settled fate. As she sat there she was planning her marriage day. She was to be married in a month's time.

Presently there was a hasty ring at the front door, and then Eva's little sister came running through the hall to Eva.

"Eva, here is a telegram for you." It was Eva's first experience of telegrams. But she opened this without a tremor. She had a curiously assured feeling of happiness and security. The message was signed Ada Sinclair, the name of the sister of her betrothed, and it announced to her that Richard Sinclair, the man she was to marry, had died suddenly of heart disease.

Death was a horrible unreality to Eva Spring. She dropped the bit of paper and stared at her little sister blankly. Then she dropped her fan into her hands, and mourned in a terrified, helpless way.

Susie picked up the telegram, and sped away with it to their mother.

Mrs. Spring came in presently, wrought up to the intense pitch of the moment, and took her daughter in her arms.

Then Eva broke down utterly, and cried—cried with the passionate abandonment of youth. After that, there were hours of dismal waiting, until they all could be acquainted with the sad details.

Eva waited with the same terrified look on her face that had been its first expression. It was a look far more of terror than of grief; it seemed to her, in the morning of her youth and of her strength, that it was incredible she should have been overtaken by this overwhelming blow.

She was nineteen, and she had been engaged for six months to a man fifteen years her senior, whose sudden and violent fancy for her had been the cause of the most lively satisfaction to her friends. The Springs were poor people, and it was a matter very near the heart of Mrs. Spring, who was a widow, that her four daughters should be settled in life early. So, when Mr. Sinclair had proposed to Eva, Mrs. Spring had shed tears of joy, and Eva's aunts, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Field, had shed tears of joy; and altogether Eva had had the sensation of having done a very praiseworthy thing in having secured the attentions of this rich, distinguished man.

He was a very wealthy man indeed, and he had made his mark in public life. Many mammae had discovered numberless attractions in Mr. Sinclair, and had told their daughters that they would have perfect confidence in entrusting the happiness of a child of theirs to his keeping. Moreover, he was an agreeable, kind-hearted man, whom many a woman might have learned to love. It was no wonder that little Eva Spring accepted him. To tell the truth, she would have been almost too shy to refuse him. It seemed such an act of condescension on his part to want to marry her.

She was very happy during their engagement. It was nice, very nice, to be treated like a little queen, and have lovely flowers brought to her every day, and new books, and lovely bracelets, and rings and trinkets of all descriptions. It was very nice, although there had been times when her lover's pro-

fession had oppressed her. She had tried to tell him so once, but he had not seemed to catch her idea.

"If I only could do something for you!" she had said.

"But you are doing something for me," he had rejoined, in the smothered tone which he was apt to fall into in cases of strong emotion.

He was going to add, "You love me," but somehow he changed the form of expression. He said, "You let me love you," instead.

The tears came into Eva's eyes. She was not a girl given to coarces, but she stooped over then and kissed his hand. Whereupon he had clasped hers in a long, silent grasp, and they had sat still for a long while; he, for one, intensely happy and satisfied; Eva not so much happy as wondering at the strange fate that had given her, a weak girl, so great an influence over this self-controlled, self-absorbed man.

And now he was dead!

It is in moral things as in physical. The first effect of a blow is to deaden and to stun. The real, keen suffering is not for sometime afterwards. So was it with Eva. It was not until weeks and months went by that she experienced any keen, painful sensation of loss; that she really missed from her life the kind care which had promised once to be to her both father's and husband's. But it seemed as though her loss had penetrated all through her girl-life. Perhaps this was because she was a very genuine nature and her experiences were never superficial.

It was this first grief and loss which changed Eva from a smiling, careless girl into a quieter, graver woman. She wore a black dress for a year or two, and mourned the man who had loved her so dearly with a tender and grateful sorrow. The fact of her bereavement, and of her altered ways and dress, shut her out from many of the innocent pleasures that she would otherwise have enjoyed during those young years. The sister who was next her in age fell into the place which Eva used to occupy, and was the one on whom the maternal hopes and fears chiefly centred. It came to be a matter of course that Eva should get Marion ready for parties, and play for her and her friends to dance, and in a general way promote her interests and enjoyment.

But on one bright summer day came an invitation to both the sisters from a cousin of their mother's to pay her a visit. She wanted Eva and Marion to come to her for at least six weeks. Marion was impatient to go, and somehow there was also a stir of pleasure at Eva's heart at the prospect of new scenes and new scenes. However, to her mother's surprise, she acceded to her cousin's request without a word of hesitation. Truth to tell, the whole family had hastily agreed to let her sit among the shadows, and this was the first suggestion which had been made to her for some time that there could be any other future for her.

Eva began her preparations, to be sure, with a feeling that she ought not to be so glad of this break; but, nevertheless, glad she was. Youth cannot go on mourning for ever.

The day after their arrival Mrs. Willard and her two young cousins strolled into the pleasant shaded park, where they seated themselves to listen to the band, which always played there on an afternoon.

Presently two officers sauntered up, and renewed their acquaintance with Marion. She walked away between them presently, tossing her coquettish little head and flirting her coquettish little parasol. Marion's happiness was secured for that day at least.

Presently two other gentlemen, acquaintances of Mrs. Willard's this time, came up. She presented to her cousin the Messrs. Elmwood, father and son. Eva looked up, and saw two handsome faces, strikingly alike, dark-eyed and regular-featured. Both men were in deep mourning, and both had that somewhat preoccupied air which is the badge of a mourning of the heart.

Perhaps it was this air of sadness which first attracted Eva to Ross Elmwood. Afterwards her Cousin Marcia told her that her friend's has lost wife and mother, sister and daughter, on a steamer which had been lost at sea a few months ago. Mr. Elmwood's nerves had been so completely shattered by this blow, and he had been so wholly prostrated, that at one time the physicians had very little hopes of his recovery.

"But, fortunately, he has a very devoted son," concluded Cousin Marcia. "Now, Eva, it will be an act of charity if you will try to brighten that poor man's life. They say he can't forgive himself because he let his wife start alone on the voyage. The only thing to be done is to try to recruit poor Mr. Elmwood's shattered energies."

Eva Spring had a talent for sympathy and the next time that they again met father and son, she devoted herself to the stricken man's entertainment with the pretty, unstudied devotion which young ladies permit themselves to show to elderly gentlemen. In consequence, the son surveyed her with an admiring interest—a grateful interest almost. For the first time for months his father was roused to anything like cheerfulness.



[THE TELEGRAM.]

There was a younger brother at college, and two sisters, who were still schoolgirls. After a while, when Eva had found out where the Elmwoods had their rooms, she was not surprised to notice that Ross Elmwood's light burned into the small hours of the night. Eva had fallen herself into a bad habit of keeping late hours. She learned—as one does learn such facts concerning persons in whom one chances to be interested—that he was at hard professional work, planning bridges, tunnels, and so on. Father and son were both engineers.

"And Ross all the better engineer from his father's having been one before him," commented Mrs. Willard, who had implicit faith in hereditary talent.

It is curious, when two people are thrown together for the first time, how they, in the first place, are thrown back upon their imaginations to supply the past in each other's lives. Eva interested Ross Elmwood extremely from the moment that he first met her; he had been a society man from his youth up, and he had been thrown with fashionable young ladies, until he was heartily weary of the type. And Eva was a new experience. He had heard that she was from a quiet town, and he fancied that she had never come in contact with any life more exciting than usually falls to the lot of quiet country people; had never had a love-affair, for instance. In fact, he said to himself that she looked as though the pulses of her life had never been stirred by any strong emotion whatever. A girl with no past—so he thought of her to himself.

Then he fell to wondering what kind of future hers would be. He interrupted himself with an impatient ejaculation. What folly in him to be indulging in these sentimental speculations. He who had a good ten years' hard work before him before he could begin to take time to sentimentalize!

A party of them had gone out in the woods for the day. Not Marion; she and her officer friends openly avowed their detestation of country walks; they preferred to sit under the trees, listen to the music, flirt. Mrs. Willard and Eva are of the pre-

sent party, and the Elmwoods, and half a dozen others, scattered around upon the rocks, stretched under trees, lounging, talking, observing. Eva has extemporized a swing out of a swaying bough. She is swinging herself lightly backwards and forwards, whilst Ross Elmwood is applying all his force to weigh it down to a proper height from the ground. Eva has tied a gipsy hat over her falling chestnut hair with a broad cherry ribbon; there is not a suspicion of mourning about her costume now. Ross has pushed back his hat from his singularly handsome face, and as she looks up at him, all eagerness and animation, he looks down to the full as eagerly, and with as great an appearance of enjoyment.

"What beautiful young people," says a stranger tourist to Mrs. Willard, with whom he has happened to come up the mountains. "How admirably they are matched. Lovers, of course?"

Mrs. Willard laughed frankly, as she bestowed a searching look upon the speaker. She recognized him as a member of the artist family; a family who take a professional interest in their neighbour's concerns; studying their peculiarities as a chemist studies the properties of the compounds he is dealing with. Mrs. Willard was herself a thoroughly unconventional person. She replied as gravely as she had been addressed.

"First let me tell you that the lady is my cousin. No; I hardly think they are lovers. They do not know such to be the case themselves, at all events."

"Ah! your cousin. How bright and happy they look. Not a care."

Cousin Marcia looked at Eva, and marvelled that the traces of the troubles the girl to her sure knowledge had had should so entirely have passed away. And Ross Elmwood! his dark eyes were bright; the lines of care were smoothed out of his brow. Mrs. Willard would have said that he was a man of pleasure, who had never known a graver thought, had she seen him for the first time.

There was something singularly fascinating in

Ross's gaiety to Eva. Her woman's instinct told her that she was the fairy who had conjured it up. If she had met him first in this mood, he would never have attracted her as he had; his gravity and pre-occupation had at first interested her; with that talent for sympathy of hers, she had longed to help him—she who had known what it was to be heavy-hearted herself. Now she felt a strong personal interest in his recovered spirits. She was glad herself from sympathy. But Ross, gazing at her admiringly, fancied that she was glad because she had never known any other emotion. And, in his present mood, her girlish light-heartedness soothed and composed him. Life had of late been so hard and stern to him.

From that day dated a strong friendship between Eva and Ross. I am quite sure that if Eva had not taken it into her head to be conciliating and gracious to Ross, he would never have devoted to her the attention and thought which he did. But Eva had made up her mind that she would put a little sunshine into his life, and Eva's persistent friendliness proved irresistible. Eva had made up her mind to befriend this tall, manly, clever Ross Elmwood; and, although it came over her sometimes as being quite ridiculous, and very much as though she were rehearsing the old fable of the mouse who was kind to the lion, still she kept up her daily offerings of little bouquets to the elder Elmwood, and her daily cheery little speeches to the younger, and her constant endeavour to draw them into all their pleasant parties and excursions and "good times."

I think that Eva Spring was as little of a coquette as could be conceived. She was a thoroughly warm-hearted, good-hearted girl, and that was all. It did not occur to her to try to make Ross Elmwood in love with her; and I will confess that it was a matter of very genuine surprise to her when it suddenly dawned upon her that he might be. Mrs. Willard first put into words the vague suspicion which had been floating in her mind for some time. Ross had called one morning on one of the errands which he had discovered a great facility in manufacturing. As Eva threw down the book she had been reading to her cousin to go down to him, Mrs. Willard said:

"Be careful, Eva. Don't hurt that poor fellow. He's too nice to hurt."

A blush spread all over Eva's face. She did not pretend not to understand.

"I don't want to hurt him," she said, adding, less ingenuously, "besides, I am sure that he is able to take care of himself, Cousin Marcia. He would as soon fall in love with your little Nannie as with me."

"Yes," Cousin Marcia said, dryly. "He is very much in the habit of sending Nannie books to read, and contriving to be with her half his time. Really, I think I may begin to look upon him as a possible son-in-law."

Eva ran downstairs laughing, and entered the parlour with the laugh still in her eyes.

"I have come to say good-bye," Ross said. "My father is so very much better, that it behoves us to remove to less extravagant quarters. And I had a letter this morning, offering me a contract to build a bridge. So we are off to-morrow."

"I am very sorry," answered Eva, frankly.

"Are you? I wish I were sure that you were. I wish I might ask you to try to be. But I can't. I must learn the golden gift of silence for a while longer."

All the while his eloquent dark eyes were upon her, seemingly searching her soul. Her own dropped beneath his gaze. Then, in the next moment, she rallied, a little indignantly. After all, what had he said to her? Generalities that might mean anything or nothing.

"Yes, I am sorry," she repeated. "And I always mean what I say, Mr. Elmwood. But I hope you are going to win fame and fortune. I wish you all manner of good things; let me see—what shall they be? Success, money—what else?"

"Whatever you most desire yourself. My future would be valueless if I thought it could never have an interest for you. All that I am going to try for will be for you and for your sake."

Afterwards, when he recalled that interview, it was a source of consolation and encouragement to him that Eva did not change the subject or look displeased, or tacitly discourage him in any other way. No—he was permitted to hold the reins of the conversation himself; and presently he directed their talk to less dangerous ground. He told her what his winter's work would be likely to be; where he and his father would live; what a very good thing this contract would be for him, and so on.

Eva listened with a throbbing heart. He was going. So long as they had been together, day after day, she had drifted along in a contented sort of fashion, satisfied that he should be with her and that he should be her friend. But now all that was over! A dissatisfaction came over her. How lonely she was going to be without him! Whereas, he was going into so active and stirring a life that he would

have time not even for regret or for memory. His high spirits, and evident delight at the good luck that had befallen him, jarred upon her. Six weeks ago, he had been very different. Six weeks ago the lion had been in need of the services even of a poor little mouse. Now, the mouse had returned to her normal state of unimportance. Still, true to the duplicity natural to feminine human nature from time immemorial, she kept her own counsel, and was very bright and charming to Mr. Elmwood all through the long visit he paid her that morning, until he finally said:

"May I see your cousin to bid her good-bye, Miss Eva?"

Marion also happened to drop in at this crisis with the inevitable beau. So what with a conversation with Mrs. Willard, and a dip into the general conversation going on, there was no farther opportunity for adieu between Mr. Elmwood and Eva. But when he had shaken hands and was gone, Eva went upstairs and gave way completely. She was amazed at herself, and at the amount of feeling which she found herself exhibiting.

In the midst of an uncontrollable flood of tears, she happened to raise her eyes, and caught sight of a picture of Mr. Sinclair, which she always carried about with her, hanging on the wall. She looked at it with such a curious feeling of strangeness! The girl who was shedding these passionate tears for Ross Elmwood did not seem to be the same girl who had once mourned another lover. And yet she had had the right to grieve in the one case; whereas now was she not proving herself both unmaidenly and childish? Whereat she cried again.

Poor girl, she was learning that "there is no fanaticism like the fanaticism of the heart." A strange new feeling had taken sudden possession of her. By the light of this new experience she suddenly discovered how utterly mistaken she had been when she had fancied she had ever cared for any one before.

That put an end to Eva Spring's summer pleasure. She was actually relieved when the next mail brought a summons to the two sisters from their mother to return home. Marion rebelled, but there was no help for it. Mrs. Spring had her own notions, and she had quite decided that the original six weeks' limit for the girls' visit was not to be exceeded.

Eva returned home, expecting to settle down into the quondam condition of dullness. The happy girl without a past had stayed behind; the quiet woman whose bright hopes had been buried in her lover's grave returned to her old home.

But there was a difference, after all. Eva had discovered that there was a possible happiness yet for her in life. She had bloomed out suddenly under the magic touch of the wand of happiness. She might do so again; and, feeling this dimly, life was not so altogether dull and dreary as it used to be. All the years to come need not necessarily be a death in life; anything would be better than that—even the misery of looking forward to a hope which might never bear fruit.

The dull winter was broken in upon sooner than Eva had dreamed. She was arranging some lovely roses in a deep glass dish one morning, singing softly to herself meanwhile, with one of those odd, unaccountable presentiments of coming happiness which some of us can't help believing in.

A servant brought her a card, saying that the gentleman was waiting in the parlour.

It was Ross Elmwood's card.

Eva went in to him, carrying her dish of roses, her face, like a rose itself, above them, smiling and happy.

Here was an unexpected event. Ross had been ordered to this part of the country, to see about his railway; and he had decided to make his headquarters near Eva's home. In the hurry of parting he had said nothing about this to Eva, although he had known at the time that they were to be neighbours. But, meeting him again, Eva forgot to resent his too great indifference when they had parted; in fact, she was too glad to be assured that one cause of his pleasure at having been assigned to work was that in that way their paths would be again together.

Eva resigned herself to the enjoyment of the hour, and greatly surprised her mother, an hour or so afterwards, by coming singing into her room with a happier face than she had worn for years.

"I asked Mr. Elmwood to come to tea, mother," she said. "I want you to meet him—the friend of Cousin Marcia's whom I met at Mrs. Willard's."

Mrs. Spring had certainly planned and promoted the match between her daughter and Mr. Sinclair. People had said that she had been far more in love with him than Eva herself; certainly she had always encouraged Eva's reverence for his memory, and as certainly she had had too extravagant an admiration for him to be disposed to smile upon any successor of his who should not be his equal at all events. She was ambitious for Eva—in other words, she wanted her to do at least as well as she had at one time proposed to do.

"Mr. Elmwood! Who is he?" she inquired, at once worldly-wise.

"An engineer. He has charge of the railroad that is to be laid down here. Didn't we tell you about him—how good he was, and how hard he worked for his father and brothers and sisters all last summer?"

"Ah, yes, I think I remember."

Mrs. Spring was by no means taken with the description—a hard-working civil engineer. Consequently she was not disposed to do justice to poor Ross when he made his appearance that evening.

"Don't you think he is very handsome, mother?"

Marion inquired, after he had gone.

"Yes, the kind of handsome man whose good looks are a passport which he could have in no other way."

"Ah, you don't like him! Eva, I'm so glad he is not my friend."

"And handsome men are invariably coxcombs—think themselves irresistible. I should hardly have guessed him to be a fancy of Eva's, after—"

"Is he a fancy of Eva's? Take care, mother; you will be putting notions into Eva's head."

Eva walked away, provoked beyond the wont of heroines. Why couldn't people be allowed to manage their own affairs? But she had not seen the end yet.

Meanwhile, Ross was not long in finding out that he had been mistaken in Eva Spring, in one respect at least. She had had a past. Her aunt, Mrs. Field, whom he met in the ordinary course of events, took pains to inform him of the brilliant match which Eva had been on the point of making.

"Just the match for Eva," Mrs. Field sighed. "Eva is a girl of unusual character, you know, and, like most girls of that type, ambitious. Besides, she was deeply attached to Mr. Sinclair. She will not easily replace him."

Mrs. Spring also took occasion to repeat this information. Ross listened, half incredulously. How entirely he had been mistaken in the girl of his choice. Still, he was man enough to make up his mind that he would hear his fate from Eva herself. After all, what he heard from others as to what Eva felt or had felt was only surmise. And he could not help hoping.

He made no secret of his admiration, and of his determination to pass his hours of leisure—few and far between, however—with Eva. Eva treated him in return with a frank cordiality that at all events made them very happy together. In fact, she for one, was very happy.

Her mother began to have serious misgivings that she was, after all, going to throw herself away upon this obscure young man. Mrs. Spring was really unhappy about it. Ambition for her children was a duty to her. She went about with an anxious brow; actually, wrinkles began to form around her mouth.

Marion had thrown down her book one day as the two girls and their mother sat in the pleasant bow window of the library with a yawn.

"Heigho!" she said. "Here comes Mr. Elmwood, Eva, across the lawn. Would I had a lover!"

Eva dropped her book too, and leaned forward to catch a glimpse of Ross with undignified pleasure.

Mrs. Spring's patience gave way.

"Really, Eva," she said, "I am surprised at you. You really appear to be lost to all sense of propriety—delicacy. You make no secret of your preference for that young man. And yet, as far as I know, he is not an acknowledged lover."

Eva dropped into her chair scarlet.

"And perhaps never intends to be," she contrived to articulate; then went to receive Ross in a perfect paroxysm of wounded self-love and humiliation.

But she was very apt to blame herself wherever blame could reasonably be attached to her. She did not presume to question the fact that her mother was in the right.

Being a creature of impulse, she met Ross in this icy mood. He was petrified—overcome. To tell the truth, he had come to her to-day in a special state of happiness. He had had such good news from his father; he was quite well once more. This meant a great deal to Ross. It meant that his own burdens were materially lessened. The uphill journey had come to a sudden end.

But Eva froze him to the soul with her icy phrases, her frigid indifference. His enthusiasm died within him. To cap the climax, visitors came in, who effectually put an end to the interview. Ross rose and made his adieu.

He was not a man to dally with opportunity, however. He went straight home, and wrote a frank, earnest letter to Eva. He told her that he loved her, and that his circumstances would now admit of his marriage at an early day. He was afraid to trust to another interview, you see. He felt that Eva had, for some reason, dropped a veil between them. Perhaps the time had come for him to speak—to profess himself a lover. But he would trust his letter to no indifferent messenger. He took it to the house himself, meaning, if he saw Eva, to give it into her own hands after a short call. But, as it happened,

Eva was out, and Mrs. Spring received him alone in the library.

The conversation between them was not of a very thrilling nature. Ross was preoccupied and absorbed, and Mrs. Spring altogether too much occupied in her worsted-work to make the effort at keeping up the conversation. Ross again beat a retreat, after ten minutes or so.

"Will you be kind enough, Mrs. Spring, to hand this to Miss Eva?" he said, on rising, producing his letter.

Mrs. Spring took it carelessly.

"Certainly," she said, and then she smiled graciously upon Mr. Elmwood's retreating form.

She was always relieved when this young man was well out of the house.

She took up the letter presently, when she rose to go upstairs, with the intention of taking it up to Eva's room; but some one called her off, and she laid it down again.

A few minutes later Marion came in, with a crowd of young friends who proceeded to make themselves at home after the manner of Marion's young friends. Two or three of them seated themselves at the library table. By a freak of fate, poor Ross's letter was taken possession of, and was fluttered into a book of engravings which happened to be out on the table. When Eva came in presently she herself sealed her own fate by restoring this volume to its place on the library shelves. Mrs. Spring allowed the matter to escape her memory, and in this way Mr. Elmwood's letter remained unanswered.

He looked for an answer eagerly that day and the next and the day after. After that he ceased to look for an answer. Then, in the natural course of events, he met Miss Spring, and meeting her found himself repelled just as he had been at their last meeting. He conceived that she had given him just cause of offence. She had treated him outrageously. Was he entirely unworthy of her notice, that she had permitted a letter of the kind he had written to her to pass unanswered?

It is needless to say that Eva was very, very unhappy. But she had acquired a habit of outward resignation and of self-control, which stood her in good stead now. She plodded on and on, in the old-fashioned, dullish way which had been accepted by her friends as her especial vocation. Ross Elmwood remained in the town, but she never saw him—fortunately for him he was very busy at his engineering. The turn of Fortune's wheel which had brought him into Eva's neighbourhood had proved a trial instead of the anticipated blessing. But he buckled down to his disappointment like a man. Perhaps his anger and resentment made it all the easier for him to bear it.

At the opportune moment he made a new friend. I have omitted to state that he had a cousin living in the neighbourhood, who had from the first extended to him the right hand of fellowship, and requested him to make his house his head quarters. This cousin's wife had a sister staying with him, who, after her own independent fashion, determined to make Ross Elmwood her friend.

Cecilia West was very beautiful and very uncommon, and any man might have found himself greatly flattered by the unreserved preference which she showed for Ross. She was a very strong-willed woman and a very charming woman. Ross Elmwood yielded gracefully to her hundred gracious ways, and submitted to be brought into the toils of this Circe. All the while he told himself that there was no question of love between them. It was simply a matter of good fellowship and mutual enjoyment. So he came and went, and read and walked with Miss West, and did what he could to serve her and to please her. And she, in return, played for him by the hour on the piano, and studied his favourite songs, and spent all her spare hours in working him slippers and cigar cases, and gradually in a general way regarded Ross as her lover.

And gradually Ross awoke to the knowledge that such was her belief. Without being at all a vain man, he could not help realizing that Miss West treated him with most especial favour, and, to conclude, in an unguarded moment Cecilia betrayed her secret. She loved him.

Then a turmoil of feeling took possession of him—the end of which was that he proposed to Miss West. He argued upon this wise: that if Miss West would consent to being made as happy as it lay in his power to make her he would be doing nothing wrong—rather the contrary. Whereas, he might go on for ever mourning that fickle and worldly Miss Eva Spring with no advantage either to himself or to her. So, an impulse impelling him of quixotic generosity, he proposed to Cecilia West, and was accepted.

The engagement was rapturously received by Miss West's sister, and her husband, Frank Stuart, took occasion to inform the bridegroom-elect that this had been the desire of his wife's heart from the moment of her first seeing Ross.

There was no reason that Ross should not be per-

fectly happy; certainly, Cecilia was ecstatically so; but, for some reason, Ross did not rise to the exigency of the occasion. He went about like one in a dream; all this seemed to him like a dream, and a very heavy and oppressive one. He felt, for the first time in his life, like a man who had been carried by the force of circumstances beyond the control of his own will.

It was very soon given out that Mr. Elmwood and Miss West were engaged. When it was announced to the Springs Mrs. Spring glanced curiously at her daughter to see how she would take it; but Eva sat like a statue, utterly immovable. In the depths of her heart, however, she wondered how it would be possible for her to go on living. Next she wondered how much it was in the power of human nature to suffer. She—had she not suffered until every day and hour had come to be a rack on which she was stretched? But no one guessed what was passing in her mind. She went on serenely with her worsted work, stitching a heartache into each cross-stitch.

A week or so later she met Ross Elmwood at an evening party, where, however, his betrothed occupied his attention during the greater part of the evening, but afterwards Ross made it a point to cross the room and exchange commonplaces with Miss Spring. And Eva had schooled herself to go through this first meeting with propriety; she was very properly at her ease and friendly—in fact, so friendly that Ross drifted into more of a conversation than he had at first intended. She was so like that old friendly, frank summer friend of his that he forgot himself. Miss Cecilia West, his engagement—everything, in brief, for twenty minutes or so, until, in fact, he was recalled to a sense of duty by Miss West, who sent him a message to the effect that she was ready to go home.

It was a bad beginning. From that time forth, there being no reason why he should avoid Eva, he contrived to talk to her whenever they met—and in that sociable country neighbourhood they met very often—and in a little while he arrived at the conclusion that there had been a mistake somewhere, and that he had committed a grievous error. He was desperately unhappy, and Eva, for one, found this out. Miss West did not, but then she was unhappy on her own account. She was peculiar to the very last degree, and by no means stable in her rash impulses.

She had made up her mind, to begin with, that Ross Elmwood's love was necessary to her happiness. But "the spell of enchantment was broken now." Having gathered the fruit it cloyed to her taste. In the bottom of her heart she was fain to confess that Ross was not what she had fancied he would be. I am sorry for our hero; but Cecilia West having weighed him in the balance, found him wanting. Had she only known the truth she might have spared herself many qualms of conscience; as it was she fancied that he had acted the part of Circe to Ross, enticing him to destruction. But she was not a woman to sit down under the shadow of a mistake. The only question with her was how best to break the sad news to Elmwood.

One night Marion Spring gave a dance, to which Elmwood and Miss West were both bidden. The majority of the guests had spread themselves over the other rooms, and Eva and Ross, as it happened, had drifted into the library, which they were allowed to have all to themselves. As on previous occasions, Ross forgot past, actual present, future, in the bliss of being with Eva. On such occasions he could not resist trusting to fate to be kind, to life to be avert.

A book of engravings had been taken off the shelves and laid on the library table. Eva, listening to what Ross was saying meanwhile, began absently turning over the leaves. She came upon a letter directed to herself. Ross recognized in a flash that it was the fatal letter he had sent to her some months ago. With one of those curious presentiments upon her of coming joy, which I have already alluded to, Eva tore the letter open and read it through.

"Oh, why didn't I see this before? why didn't I know before?" poor Eva cried.

Ross looked at her with parched lips and glazed eyes. How he loved her, and yet his honour was pledged to another woman.

Suddenly a silken rustle stirred behind them. Cecilia West laid her soft, slender hand on Ross's shoulder. He started, and rose to his feet, with a deprecating movement.

"Nay," Cecilia said, "don't fancy that I'm angry. Do you know that, on the contrary, I am very much relieved? I had been fancying that I would be forced to break your heart, and I didn't want to do that. But I've been finding out lately that I've been making a grand mistake. I would so much rather have you for a friend than a lover. There! now we are quits. I forgive you, for my part; and I leave it to Miss Spring to decide whether you ought not to forgive me."

Afterwards, whenever Ross Elmwood heard Cecilia

West called freaky or eccentric, he blessed her most devoutly for that very eccentricity and freakiness. And, in their future intercourse, she certainly proved herself a most warm-hearted and devoted friend. She was one of the rare women who can be happy without love and marriage. In fact, she proved how perfectly she understood herself when she broke her engagement with Ross Elmwood.

And as for Ross and Eva, it is my impression that they have been convinced that the world was made for them and they for each other during many blissful months that have elapsed since then.

M. L.

THE SCANDAL-MONGERS.

If there be a habit more vile than any other upon earth, one more fraught with evil consequences and more degrading to the one who indulges in it, I believe it to be that of scandal-publishing, and I wish from my very soul that it were punishable as other and no graver crimes are by the extreme penalty of the law. When I say this I mean it, for it is no worse to rob a man of his life than it is of his character, and by no means so bad to filch his purse as to take from him his good name.

The majority of men who have any social position whatever keep truth on their side when speaking of other men. It is a little dangerous to traduce those beings who have studied the manly art of self-defence. It is left to what the gentlemen in dinner-party toasts call "Lovely Woman" to indulge herself in the highest flights of scandal, and drag through the deepest depths of impurity the sometimes blameless name of her sister woman.

There are many kinds of slander-mongers. The silly one, who, through mere love of talk, retails every story she hears, begging her audience "not to tell," and winding up with "perhaps it isn't true, you know," is after all I don't mean to cut her. Would you? The angry woman, who, in an excess of wrath, falls upon her enemy and almost believes what she says about her, for she has done her a wrong; therefore she must be everything that is impure, and people ought to know it. The spiteful one, who hates every one prettier, younger, or better dressed than herself, and who hints and sneers what she dares not say. The evil one, always a woman of whom scandalous tales might be truly told, who coolly utters falsehoods about utterly innocent people, and who, watching the first imprudent step, rejoices on uttering the tale which send the erring one headlong over the precipice of shame; and, last of all, the insane one.

There is no one, I presume, who has not met with the peculiar type of scandal-monger to whom I am about to allude. She is generally a middle-aged person, and almost always an idle one. She is not moved, as those of whom I have spoken are, by any jealous or envious feeling in particular. She receives each new-comer well, and enjoys luncheon or taking tea with any one; but her conversation is appalling. It is a stream of awful confidences regarding every human being whose name she knows, from the queen to the woman who takes in washing. She has never read a French novel, perhaps, but she excels their worst writers in her opinion of domestic life. There is not, from her point of view, an honourable husband or a true wife in the world. Old men and young ones are gay Lotharios; the smile of innocence is but a mask, and the person in the water-proof cloak and green veil going past is certainly "one of the worst intrigantes living; she can't tell how she knows it, but she does."

It is not only Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown, and the rest of your mutual acquaintance of whom she narrates dreadful things that make your blood run cold, and your crimps to stand upright on your head; but somehow she has the iniquities of one of the wives of the Caliph of Bagdad at her tongue's tip, as well as those of a Mrs. Jones, who lived next door to her twenty years ago, and who, though still unhung, poisoned her mother-in-law, who died six months after paying her a visit, besides the baker being in love with her, my dear, and she encouraging him, while Mr. Jones was absent, or why would he call three times a day, my dear, and tell the servant that he would see Mrs. Jones, as I heard myself, my dear, if she even was a dying?

It is rather a terrible thing to one who has heard their mutual acquaintances accused of all the hideous crimes to see this insane scandal-monger hobnobbing with those very persons. The remembrance of the fact that, setting original sin aside, she has committed no particular crime, cannot comfort her. Where all is left to the imagination, what may not be said? A bit of real, well-founded slander might save her. But, after all, there is less danger from this poor soul than from others of her sisterhood. With her scandal has degenerated into something so like the fancies of an opium trance that very few of her listeners really believe her, and, as she spares no one, what she says about any one becomes of little consequence.

In fact, scandal-mongers are very numerous indeed. Most women relish a little taste of the dish. Women who don't talk scandal themselves, rather like to hear it talked, and very few of us are so noble or so strong but that we have need to guard ourselves from this terrible vice—this "appetite which grows with what it feeds on"—Scandal-Mongering. M. K. D.

FAÇETIE.

LEFT IN THE HOLE.—We see it gravely stated that the old gravel pits on the west side of Tooting Common are being "cleared away." We should like to know—"how it's done."—*Fun.*

WIFE, snatching away a second plate of food from her husband at dinner: "Remember, monsieur, you go to the prefect's ball to-night, and the papers announce the buffet is laden with refreshments."

THE THREE TABLES.—A traveller recently stopped at a wayside inn in France where they sold two sorts of wine, called "first table" and "common table." "I tried them both," writes the traveller, "and found them lamen-table."

A BUSINESS ACQUAINTANCE.

Miss Lefty: "Really, sir, I don't remember; where was it I have met you?"

Jenkins: "Well, we ain't met often, so to speak; but I sold you them stockings which you've got on."

The post Longfellow, at a party, asked a French gentleman who happened to be present, why he seemed so sad and unhappy at that moment. To which the latter replied: "Me very mosh dissatisfy. Me jus hear zat my fadere be dead."

THAT'S IT.

Waiter, to Old Gent at Restaurant: "Take any pastry, sir?"

Old Gent, to Waiter: "Yes, bring me a pancake; will it be long?"

Waiter, to Old Gent: "No, sir, round!"—*Fun.*

WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

Ancient Lady: "Let me drive you, Miss Sharp. It is quite in my way, and I can't bear to think of your walking home all alone!"

Modern Dido: "Oh, I don't mind walking a bit, thanks! Besides, I want to smoke!"—*Punch.*

RATHER GIVING.

"Do you find the bump of generosity there?" said a man, whose head was undergoing phrenological inspection.

"There is something here rather giving," said the man of heads, pressing his finger on the skull.

A WISH.

Young Innocent: "I wish I was grow'd up like 'oo, Miss Estwell."

Miss E.: "You do, my darling!—why?"

Young Innocent: "Cos I'd call on all my friends, every morning, and have such lots of wine and biscuits."—*Fun.*

FEMININE INTELLIGENCE.—Our esteemed friend Mrs. Malaprop has no patience with the people who want women to have votes. She declares that, for herself, her nerves would never bear the shock of having anything to do with the electrical franchise.—*Punch.*

AN EXTINGUISHER FOR THE LATIN RACE.

Mr. Lushington Phillpotts (proud of his foreign cast of countenance): "There's precious little of the Saxon about me, I can tell you. My people, the De Louchetons de Filepotence, came over from France years—ages ago!"

Mr. Chaffington Smiley: "Ah! Before the extradition treaty, I suppose?"—*Punch.*

AGONISING!

Damon: "Hullo, Pythias! What's the matter?"

Pythias: "Oh, my dear fellow, I've—tut-t-t—!" (Objections)—"I've been writing to my tailor to give me another inch and a half in the waistband, and composed a valentine to my adored Clara, and—oh!—I've put 'em into the wrong envelopes, and they're posted!"—(Breaks down!)—*Punch.*

LONG COURTSHIPS.—In a recent trial of breach of promise the judge charged the jury in an exceedingly able and feeling address, in the course of which he remarked that he hardly ever knew a long courtship to turn out well, and that whatever the lady might do to remain constant the gentleman seldom did. The jury retired and in about half an hour returned with a verdict for the plaintiff.

A CONTRARY WIND.

On Candlemas Day the sky was dark and sun; One general cloud concealed the sun; And Winter ought, says the ancient rhyme, To have most of it gone at Christmas time. Whereas there was frost, a great deal more, After the festival than before.

Accordingly, this year, Winter's flaw, Blew right in the teeth of that old saw.

—*Punch.*

"CASH" WITNESSES.—A judge was trying a case where the witnesses all rejoiced in the name of

"Cash," every one of whom appeared badly in the witness box. As the plaintiff's man of law was bringing on his fifth witness, "John Cash," the judge leaned forward and whispered: "I suppose you call your witnesses cash because they are no credit to any body."

AT NIAGARA FALLS.—An Irishman was once taken to see the wonders of Niagara Falls. He did not seem to think it tremendous after all. His friend asked him, "Don't you think it a wonderful thing?" "Why is it a wonderful thing?" asked the Irishman. "Don't you see," said his friend, "that immense body of water rolling down this precipice?" Says he, "What's to hinder it?"

A SCHOOL BOY being requested to write a composition upon the subject of "pins," produced the following: "Pins are very useful. They have saved the lives of a great many men, women, and children; in fact whole families." "How so?" asked the puzzled teacher. "Why, by not swallowing them." That matches the story of the other boy who defined salt as "the stuff that makes potatoes taste bad when you don't put on any."

SCENE IN A POLICE COURT.

Attorney (to witness): "What do you deal in?"
Witness: "Anything, from a needle to an anchor."

(Laughter.)
Attorney: "Did you ever buy onion seed and pianoforte wire?"

Witness: "Yes; and I would buy second-hand attorneys if I could get them cheap, with the prospect of an early sale." (Laughter.)

THE DIFFICULTY SOLVED.

A letter was received, in a certain town, directed "To the biggest fool in —." The postmaster was absent, and on his return one of the younger clerks informed him of the letter.

"And what became of it?" inquired the postmaster.

"Why," replied the clerk, "I did not know who the biggest fool in the town was, so I opened the letter myself."

"And what did you find in it?"

"Why," responded the clerk, "nothing but the words, 'Thou art the man!'"

A CORRESPONDENT writes that a clergyman entered a provision dealer's shop in one of the mining districts, and, pointing to some sealed tins, inquired what they contained. "Grouse and partridges, sir," replied the dealer. "How many birds are there in each tin, and what do you charge?" "There's one bird in each tin, and they are half-a-crown." "Thank you, that's more than I can afford." "No offence, sir, but we do not lay them in for gentlemen like you. We got them for the miners. A miner called with his wife half an hour ago and asked the same questions as you have. When I had answered them he said, 'Missis, we'll be two of them for tea.'"

FIRST THOUGHTS.

"Every morning. A triplet of thoughts for every day in the year." A book lately published with this title has set us pondering the possibility of the human intellect regularly originating three fresh thoughts every morning for a whole year—a total of 1095 thoughts, with three extra reflections for leap year. On special occasions, such as birth-days, wedding-days, holidays, fine days, and rent-days, we can believe that the mind might be capable of so gigantic an effort; but on all ordinary days—and they are the majority in the lives of most of us—it is to be feared that the meditations of the bulk of mankind would neither dazzle by their brilliancy nor bewilder by their profundity.

We have tried the experiment for one week, in good health, furnished apartments, and a tolerably quiet neighbourhood, and the result, carefully noted down each morning of the seven, is now lying before us. It was not sufficiently encouraging to induce us to persevere in the practice.

SUNDAY:

Sunday morning! How delightful! I need not get up till ten. I hope it is not going to rain.

I wonder whether the tailor sent my new coat home last night.

MONDAY:

Another week of work!

Glad to see there is no fog this morning.

I suppose I must get up.

TUESDAY:

I wonder whether I have been called.

By Jove, it only wants twenty minutes to nine! I must have overslept myself.

How cold it is! I hardly think I have time for a bath this morning.

WEDNESDAY:

I will not play whist again in a hurry.

What atrocious stuff that whiskey of Puddicombe's was!

How villainously that girl cleans the boots: I must speak to Mrs. Pinkey.

THURSDAY:

What a row those confounded cats did make in the night!

I wonder whether I shall hear from Cassiopia this morning.

How stupid of me to leave my slippers down-stairs!

FRIDAY:

I really must complain if that dog goes on barking in this way.

It seems rather windy this morning; I hope it will dry the streets.

Five minutes more, and then I will get up.

SATURDAY:

Rain again! and I wanted to go to Croydon this afternoon to call on the Navenbys.

I know what I will do—take Cassie and her cousin to the Eclectic to-night.

What a blessing! to-morrow is Sunday.—Punch.

PAY AS YOU GO.

A word of good counsel

We ne'er should forget,

Is that which forewarns us

To keep out of debt.

For half of life's burdens

That man overthrows

Who starts out determined

To pay as he goes.

'Tis folly to listen

To those who assert

That a system of credit

Does good and not hurt.

For many have squandered

Their incomes away,

And hearts have been wrecked by

A promise to pay.

A man to be honest,

As merchant or friend,

In order to have,

Must be willing to spend.

Is it love or affection,

Or faith they bestow?

Return their full value,

And pay as you go.

He loses the sweetness

That life can impart,

Who looks up a treasure

Of wealth in his heart;

To reap a rich harvest

Of pain and regret,

When, too late, he discovers

How great was his debt.

No loss like the losing

That comes of delay

In binding the wounds that

Are bleeding to-day!

For where is the comfort

Of tears that are shed

On the face of the dying—

The grave of the dead?

A word of good counsel

We ne'er should forget;

And to keep out of danger,

Is to keep out of debt!

If peace and contentment,

And joy you would know,

Don't live upon credit,

But pay as you go!

J. P.

GEMS.

THERE is something in obstinacy which differs from every other passion. Whenever it fails, it never recovers, but either breaks like iron, or crumbles sulkily away, like a fractured arch. Most other passions have their periods of fatigue and rest, their sufferings and their cure; but obstinacy has no resource, and the first wound is mortal.

THERE is a vast difference between the expression of a due and delicate appreciation of merit, and that false and exaggerated praise which is dictated by adulation. The former is always received with pleasure; but the latter wounds the susceptibility of those on whom it is lavished; to a mind rightly constituted there being nothing more painful than undeserved, or even excessive, commendation.

How bravely a man can walk the earth, bear the heaviest burdens, perform the severest duties, and look all men boldly in the face, if he only bears in his breast a clear conscience. There is no spring, no spur, no inspiration like this. To feel that we have omitted no task, and left no obligation undischarged, this fills the heart with satisfaction and the soul with strength.

From Stuttgart the death is announced of Dr. David Frederick Strauss, the author of "The Life of

Jesus." The deceased was born in June, 1808, and was consequently in the sixty-sixth year of his age. He published, in 1835, the work, "The Life of Jesus," which is associated with his name. It at once brought him prominently before the world, and was soon translated into the various languages of Europe. His latest work, "The Old Faith and the New," had only recently been published.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

REMEDY FOR CROUP.—A lady correspondent says the following is an effective remedy for croup: "Half a teaspoonful of pulverized alum in a little treacle. It is a simple remedy, one almost always at hand, and one dose seldom fails to give relief. If it should, repeat it after one hour."

SAUSAGE MEAT.—If you want it extra nice take two fresh hams and one shoulder; take off the skin, and have it chopped nicely, season it with salt, pepper, sage, and a very little sugar. If you like spiced meats, use with that a few cloves, some mace, and nutmeg. Keep it in a dry, cool place, and fry it in balls, or stuff the skins when you first make it for dry sausages.

DRIED FRUITS.—A bushel of fresh apples, weighing about fifty pounds, will furnish about seven pounds of good dried fruit; or, if the cores are not cut out, nor the skins removed, there will be nine dried pounds. There is consequently about eighty-two per cent. of water in the apples, but fruits generally have about eighty-five per cent. Tomatoes have a much larger percentage, so that one bushel will dry down to three pounds. In drying peaches, the skins and stones being removed, it requires ten fresh bushels to make one dried bushel.

MISCELLANEOUS.

An industrial and artistic international exhibition is to be held in 1875 at the Paris Palais de l'Industrie.

THE vineyard of Clos-Vougeot is to be put up for sale by auction on March 10th, at the Chamber of Notaries of Paris. The upset price is 1,900,000*fr.*

DIM writing nearly effaced by age may be restored by application of a solution of prussiate of potash in water. Wash the parts with a hair pencil, and the writing will appear if the paper has not been destroyed.

THE Duke d'Aumale has not, as was reported, been made Commander-in-Chief of the French army; but it is said that he is to be rewarded for his services in the Bazaine trial with an important military command. It seems that a general staff in imitation of the Prussian staff is to be organized, and that the duke is to be placed at the head of it.

A POISONOUS fish, called by the natives Bibi, has been discovered by Dr. Beccari, the distinguished Italian traveller and naturalist, in his recent exploration of the Aru Islands, in the Malay Archipelago. This fish has the habit of inflating itself with air. Dr. Beccari writes that on the day of his arrival in a certain village five of the natives were poisoned by eating it, and all of them died.

RUSSIAN LUXURY.—A correspondent at St. Petersburg writes: "While upon the subject of balls I may note that at the Winter Palace the other night the ball-room was lit by 6,000 wax-lights, and the whole suite of saloons and supper-rooms by 26,600. The exact number of persons who sat down to supper was 1,950, and your readers may judge of the cost of the feast when I say that one dish of which there was far more than enough for all was of exceedingly fine asparagus. Now they tell me that asparagus in St. Petersburg, at this time of the year, for a supper of 2,000 persons, could not possibly have been bought for less than four thousand roubles, or between five and six hundred pounds."

EGYPTIAN MUMMY CLOTH.—The long linen bandages in which the ancient Egyptians swathed their mummies, after the lapse of three thousand years are frequently found in an excellent state of preservation, though discoloured with age. A recent writer on this subject says: "The beauty of the texture, and the peculiarity in the structure of a mummy cloth was very striking. It was free from gum or resin, or impregnation of any kind, and had evidently originally been white. It was close and firm, yet very elastic. The yarn of both warp and woof was double, consisting of two fine threads twisted together. The wool was single. The warp contained ninety threads to the inch, the woof of woof only forty-four. The fineness of these materials, after the manner of cotton yarn, was about thirty hanks in the pound. The subsequent examination of a great variety of mummy cloths showed that the disparity between the warp and woof belonged to the system of manufacture, and that the warp had generally twice or thrice, and not seldom four times, the number of threads in one inch that the woof had."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROPER.—You will get every information on applying at Doctors' Commons.

LONG SHAKES.—Address your inquiry to the War Office.

NEMO.—You will find all particulars concerning the local papers in the Newspaper Press Directory.

POLLY.—A lady is to acknowledge the gentleman first; at least such is the recognized etiquette. White kid gloves are the correct things for evening dress.

GEORGE.—Lempriere will answer your purpose for the general details of history and of classic mythology. But be careful to get a recent edition.

F. V. M.—The eminent tragedian Gustavus V. Brooke perished on board the "London" in the Bay of Biscay. Few only survived.

EXUMA.—The line "Coming events cast their shadows before," is by Campbell, and occurs in his noble poem "Lochiel's warning." The other quotation is from Alexander Pope, and is to be found in his "Essay on Man."

CAROLINE.—The application of unguent is a certain remedy for those disagreeable excrescences called warts. For the rest, we should think that the use of due tonic medicines would fully serve the turn.

KATE.—The works of Eugene Sue may be procured by order of any of the French booksellers, that is to say in the original language. The "Mysteries of Paris" has frequently appeared in an English dress.

G. T. L.—If the money is really arranged as you state you can compel them to pay you the money. Under what pretence do they decline to pay you? If you will tell us this, we shall be the better able to advise you.

ORAL V.—Thanks for your sketch called "The Doctor's Revenge." The tale seems rather commonplace in construction, but the composition is good, and if it is an early effort, you ought to take courage and proceed.

INQUIRE.—The Brocken is the highest summit of the Harz mountains in Hanover. This summit is at times enveloped in a thick mist which reflects in a very magnificent degree any form opposite at sunset. Hence the account of the Spectre of the Brocken.

ALICE MAUDE.—The lines are creditable, only they require a little careful revision, such as you may readily bestow upon them. In the second verse you will find that "eyes" cannot rhyme with "high." Look them over again. The lines, though somewhat juvenile, contain some fair poetic promise.

ROBERT.—Mont Blanc, in the Swiss Alps, is the highest mountain in Europe, being 15,781 feet above the level of the sea. The summit was first reached by Saussure, 2nd Aug. 1787. Accounts of the ascent made by Mr. Aldjo, Charles Fellows (1827) and of Professor Tyndall (1857-8) have been published.

ALICE.—The best possible preparation for ordinary cases of indigestion is taraxacum (the familiar product of the herb dandelion) which, taken thrice daily, with a very slight admixture of muriatic acid, will certainly render you a material service. The cost for each bottle is under a shilling—about eightpence.

MAY E. N.—A current of electricity will give you some relief. Take a preparation of quinine. 2. Blushing is probably the result of lack of confidence. Go frequently into society, and the habit will in time leave you. If, on the other hand, it arises from nervousness try some course of tonic medicine, frequent bathing, etc., in order to invigorate the entire system.

LEO.—Your questions are to some extent vague. Many people go out regularly in the night air, without sustaining any injury to their complexion. The preparation mentioned has been often tried, and is uniformly considered serviceable. If the skin is rough glycerine, in rose water, may be used. But the state of the complexion depends largely on the state of the health.

EDWIN.—Colenso's Arithmetic is one of the best, but the exercises contained in it are difficult of solution. However, Rome was not built in a day, and Perardua and alia (through difficulties to the heights) as Mr. Hannay's historic motto significantly insinuated. You can procure a key to the book mentioned, and if wisely used, that would be a great aid to you in your studies.

FEE MARK.—The word *foxt* is pronounced *Fowt*. This is the name of a celebrated medieval magician and dealer in the black art; his famous book, containing the secrets which cost him his soul, is still preserved in one of the German university libraries. On this legend is based, to some extent, Goethe's fine play, and also the opera *umation*.

STUDENT.—By Rhetoric is meant first, a theory of composition, and secondly (but in an ill sense) mere verbal adornments as opposed to good solid reasoning. Cicero, in a well known passage, includes the whole province of rhetoric when he says "We are first to consider what is to be said; secondly, how; thirdly, in what words; and

lastly, how it is to be ornamented." You can get a good translation of Aristotle's Rhetoric for a few shillings. and Blair's Lectures and Whately's Rhetoric are also well worth reading. Read carefully the best English writers, and then form your own style, keeping it as natural as possible.

E. A. O.—1. Address to the Civil Service Commissioners, Cannon Row, Westminster. Get also either Stanford's or White's Guide to the Civil Service. 2. Any bookseller will supply you with the geography you require—only see that you obtain the latest edition. 3. The writing is certainly capable of great improvement, but this you may with a little pains easily set right.

S. G.—The Monument, near London Bridge, cost 13,700*l.*, begun 1671; finished 1677; it is 202*ft.* high, has a staircase of 345 steps; the urn on the top is 42*ft.* high; the Latin inscription was written by Dr. Gale, Dean of York; some words were added about the Romanists in 1681, but were erased by order of the Common Council in 1831. We can find no record of the height of the other tower you mention.

ALFRED.—The Fleet marriages were at one time clandestinely performed without banns or license by needy chaplains, in the Fleet Prison, London. As many as thirty marriages occasionally occurred in a day; and, according to Malcolm's History of London, 2,354 were registered in the four months ending with Feb. 1705. You will find a capital description of these singular ceremonies in Dr. Smollett's "Roderick Random." They were suppressed by the Marriage Act of 1754.

FANNY E. H.—The lines called "Barwell," are pleasing in sentiment, but you have not adequately mastered the rules of versification. Sometimes there is a syllable too much, sometimes a syllable too little. Your ear, with careful practice, ought to enable you to remedy that defect. As you seem to desire to cultivate poetry, you might derive much valuable information by studying the rules and examples in Walker's Rhyming Dictionary. There is much art in the writing of genuine verse.

MY LITTLE LOVE AT SCHOOL.

How patiently I waited when
My little love was late;
But then how bright the smile she gave
As I held back the gate.
She passed, and where she walked the sun
Lost half his glorious sheen—
At least it seemed so to these eyes,
That saw in her their queen.

My glance was sometimes on my books—
My thoughts on her always,
And in my silly head I dreamed
Of happier future days;
Of castle built in fairy realms,
Fortunes by genius brought;
Of present facts and present cares
There was not room for thought.

We grew; our paths diverged; she went
Away to distant lands;
I sorrowed, but, obedient,
Obedient my fate's commands.
Now where is she, and where am I?
Heaven knows, I cannot tell
Of her. I'm married; children four;
Can she have done as well?

Oh, childish love! Can after years
Renew that spotless flame?
Can manhood, with its passion fire,
Its reason, cold and tame,
Restore that dear Platonic time
When soul and heart were pure?
Why should such heavens fade away—
Why can they not endure? F. G. O.

M. H., forty-six, tall, a widow, possessing a small income of her own.

M. A. S., a widow, and small tradesman, wishes to correspond with lady with a view to matrimony.

ARTHUR, twenty-five, tall, dark, and is managing clerk in a solicitor's office. Respondent must be a blonde, loving, and accomplished.

LULIAN M., twenty-three, a merry Irish girl, loving, musical, and having a small income. Respondent must be about her own age, and a naval officer preferred.

DEANESBURG, twenty-three, 5*ft.* 8*in.*, a seaman in the Royal Navy, considered handsome, and would make a good husband to a loving wife.

SIN BALPH, twenty-six, tall, dark-brown hair, and holding a good business appointment. Respondent must be loving, well educated, and of musical tastes.

RUFERT, twenty-four, 5*ft.* 8*in.*, light hair, blue eyes, and considered good looking. Respondent must be under his own age, a brunette, and of loving disposition.

WILLIS E., eighteen, a clerk, 5*ft.* 9*in.*, blue eyes, fair complexion, and good looking. Respondent must not be over eighteen, ladylike, and of a loving disposition.

NISSE, twenty-seven, 5*ft.* dark complexion, and of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a gentleman about forty, tall, and of light complexion.

MART, twenty-five, 5*ft.* 8*in.*, fair, good tempered, and loving. Respondent must be about the same age, tall, dark, kind, and in a good position.

LOTTIE, twenty-six, tall, fair, dark hair, nice looking, and able to make a home comfortable. Respondent must be fair, tall, loving, and in a good position.

EMILY, twenty-five, medium height, a tradesman's daughter, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be about the same age, warm-hearted, and fond of home.

LORENZO, thirty, a teacher of music, long resident at Milan, dark, and considered handsome. Respondent must be accomplished, musical, and one perfectly competent to manage a home.

H. H. B., twenty-eight, tall, dark, an artist by profession, residing at Kensington, desires the society of an affectionate, educated, and domesticated wife, who must be also a good housekeeper.

MARY AMANDA, nineteen, tall, fair, light-blue eyes, and dark-brown hair, desires to correspond with a young tradesman, who must be dark, in a good position, and of a loving nature.

FEELISA, a native of the Isle of Bourbon, eighteen, petite, dark, and considered pretty, speaks French and Italian

fluently, is very loving, and has good expectations. Respondent must be between twenty and thirty, a gentleman, and one who would make a good husband.

A. H., twenty-one, fair complexion, affectionate, and fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a gentleman in the army.

ARFARICIO, nineteen, medium height, fair, brown hair, fond of music and home. Respondent must be about seventeen, dark, fond of music and home.

LOTTIE JESSIE, eighteen, tall, fair complexion, brown hair and eyes, loving, well connected, and has a fortune of 2,000*l.*

HELEN M., twenty, medium height, dark, ladylike, and possesses an income of 100*l.* annually. Respondent must be an educated gentleman, and must have a good income. Must not be over thirty.

ROBERT L., twenty-four, tall, auburn hair, and occupying a good commercial position in the City. Respondent must be affectionate and domesticated, and under his own age.

ELIZA M., a young widow, medium height, good figure, and fair. Is an excellent housekeeper. Respondent must be under forty, must be kind and good tempered, and a tradesman preferred.

T. T. S., thirty-six, a widower, loving, domesticated, and engaged in the scholastic profession, desires a partner about his own age, who is experienced in the details of household management.

SON OF THE WAVE, twenty-two, tall, dark, blue eyes, and considered good looking. Respondent must be fair, loving, and one who would make a good wife to a true-hearted sailor.

ANNABEL L., twenty-five, fair, considered pretty, and is a governess in a gentleman's family. Respondent must be loving, must possess refined tastes, and must be in a position to keep a wife comfortably.

CORISANDE, twenty-four, tall, considered handsome, and possessing a small annual income. Respondent must be affectionate, fond of home, and must occupy a good social position.

ETTY W., twenty-six, 5*ft.* 4*in.*, dark curly hair, and blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a gentleman between twenty-six and thirty, who must be good tempered, fond of home, and must hold a good position.

BILL BOAT-HOOK, twenty-five, a seaman in the Royal Navy, 5*ft.* 8*in.*, fair complexion, with auburn hair and whiskers. Respondent must be about twenty-two, loving, and domesticated.

LORELY FLORIE, eighteen, 5*ft.* 2*in.*, dark hair and eyes, and would make a loving wife. Respondent must be twenty-three, of dark complexion, and a tradesman preferred.

LOVING NELLIE, twenty-four, medium height, dark complexion, would like to meet with a respectable young man, who is fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably; a tradesman preferred.

L. S. D., forty-four, a widower, tall, dark, considered handsome, with an income of between 200*l.* and 300*l.*, increasing yearly. Respondent must be pretty, musical, good tempered, a Protestant, and about thirty.

JENNY, twenty-five, medium height, dark, good tempered, and fond of home and its comforts. Respondent must be tall, fair, and between thirty and thirty-five years of age.

K. K., twenty-nine, a private in a dragoon regiment, tall, dark, and good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady, who must be fond of home and children, and not over twenty-five years of age.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SMOKE BOX TOM is responded to by—"F. M. H.," medium height, fair, lively, and of a loving disposition.

FIRE-BALL JACK by—"A. L. X.," tall, dark, with large black eyes, and of an affectionate disposition.

A. Z. Z. B. by—"Bonny Harry," who thinks he fully answers to her description.

LOUIS B. by—"Conney," twenty-one, who would make a good wife to a loving husband.

STEAMPIPE BILL by—"E. G.," tall, fair complexion, and blue eyes, and of a loving disposition.

F. A. U. by—"Sarah Jane," eighteen, tall, brown hair and eyes, loving, and fond of home.

UNLUX BOB by—"Annie," twenty-one, medium height, brown hair and eyes, considered good looking, thoroughly domesticated, and affectionate.

M. I. H. by—"Main Tack," twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, 5*ft.* 6*in.*, dark hair, hazel eyes, and considered good looking.

C. D. by—"Lizzie," thirty-six, who thinks she would be a suitable partner; and by—"H. M.," (Manchester,) twenty-nine, and would make a loving wife.

BRUDDING SAIL by—"Dolly," nineteen, medium height, blue eyes, fair complexion, brown hair, considered very pretty, an adept in all household duties, and has a little money of her own.

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